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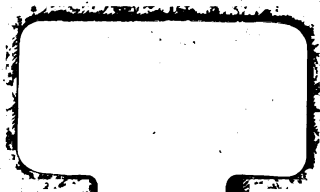
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PRIVATE THEATRICALS

BY
AN OLD STAGER

ILLUSTRATED
BY
SHIRLEY HODSON

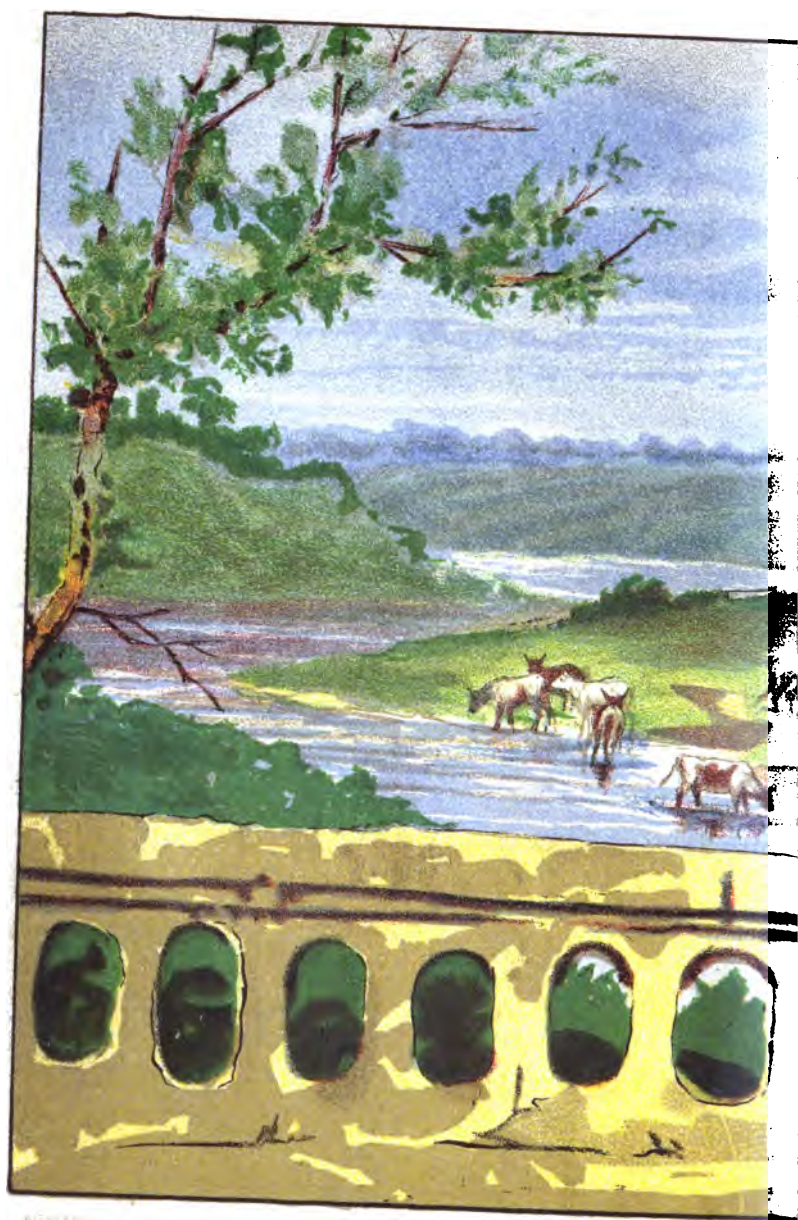


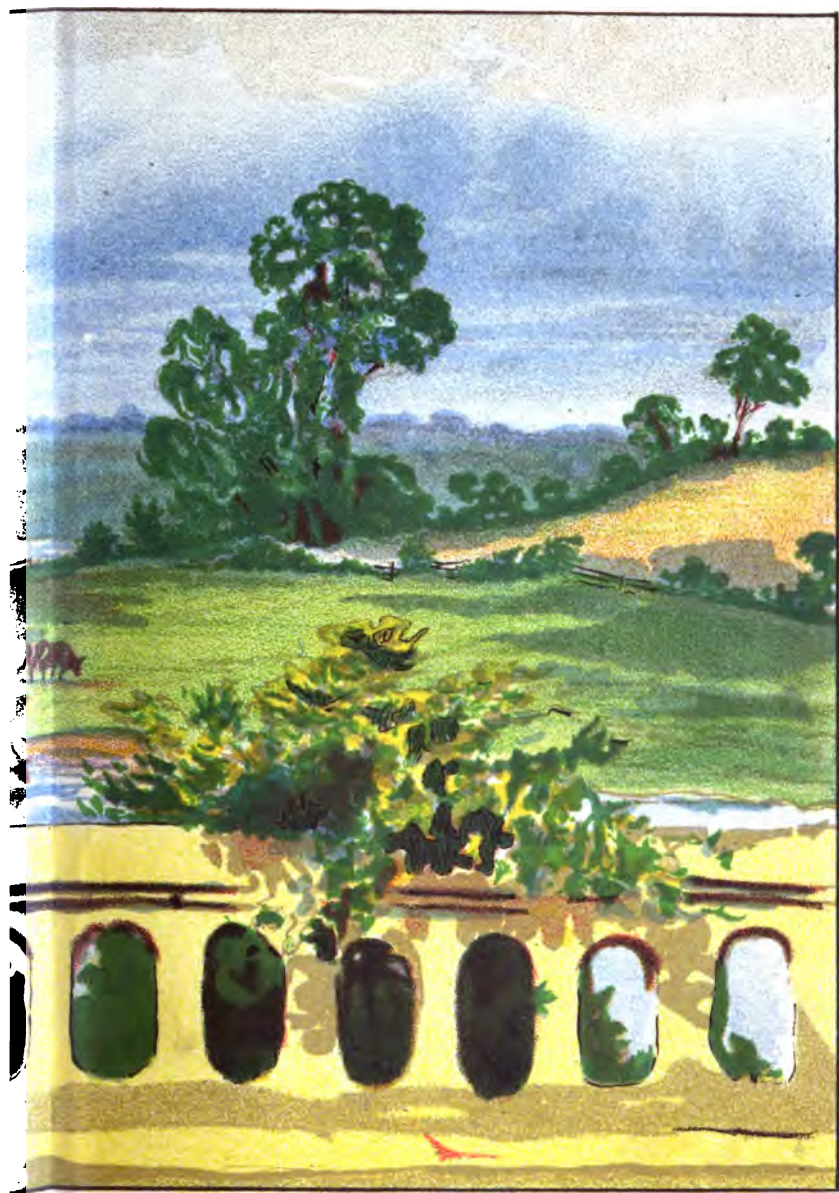




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PRIVATE THEATRICALS:

BEING

PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR THE HOME STAGE.

BY

AN OLD STAGER.

WITH PICTORIAL SUGGESTIONS FOR SCENES, AFTER DESIGNS

BY SHIRLEY HODSON.

LONDON

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PREFACE.

THE purport of the writer in compiling this little book is probably sufficiently indicated in the title and introductory chapter; but he may be expected to give the reasons—always supposed to be weighty—for undertaking the work.

To begin with an exhibition of candour, somewhat rare, it may be distinctly stated that the compiler has *not* been urged to write the following pages “in order to supply a want generally felt!” On the contrary, he has written because he liked the subject, and, like other veterans, enjoys fighting his battles o’er again.

Having been in early life smitten with the dramatic mania, which over-discreet parents

endeavoured to "stamp out" by the weight of parental authority, he has at different periods of his life suffered several relapses, the dangerous symptoms of which have occasionally been allayed by a series of home-performances, when the balance of enjoyment may possibly have been with the actors rather than with the audience. In late years, the sock and buskin had to be adopted professionally, in the fulfilment of certain musico-dramatic engagements; and although this is generally considered a tolerably effective remedial measure, it completely failed to extinguish the disorder. It has "broken out" in another form; and the present work is the outcome.

Although brought up in the rough school which is popularly believed to be efficacious in making even fools wise, the writer is still modest enough to confess that he is neither too old nor too wise to learn, and he begs to assure those who may favour him by reading this book, that he will be really grateful to any fellow-sufferer who may take the trouble

PREFACE.

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to furnish him with hints that may enable him to make his little work more acceptable to the public in a future edition. Especially desirable will be information respecting actual amateur performances, either past or to come, and in particular the transmission to the care of the publishers of any genuine play-bills of such performances will be greatly prized.

J. S. H.

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PRIVATE THEATRICALS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE stage has always been considered "the mirror of the age," in which the peculiar excellences of society are portrayed and its foibles and vices exposed, ridiculed and condemned. Properly conducted, it affords a valuable means of education—placing instruction before an audience in a highly palatable form, and at the same time intelligible even to the dullest apprehension. It was formerly esteemed by many as a school of elocution, and in this respect was looked upon as a very successful rival to the pulpit; not a few going so far as to affirm that the pulpit and the stage were the only platforms whence emanated all that was pure and refined in the method of speech.

There cannot be any doubt that the stage, at a former period, did exercise a very considerable influence upon forms of speech, pronunciation, and emphasis; and "new readings," as they are called (but which are in many cases merely novelties of emphasis), were far more frequently the subjects of discussion in society then, than they are at the present day.

Luther is not often cited as an authority on such matters, but the temptation to quote his opinion upon comedies is irresistible. "In comedies, particularly in those of the Roman writers, the duties of the various situations of life are held out to view, and, as it were, reflected from a mirror."

While admitting the intellectual advantages to be derived from theatrical representations, it has been asserted that they are more than counter-balanced by an unenviable notoriety for offending against morality. It has, of course, been pointed out frequently enough that where the stage has been coarse almost to indecency, the language has been such as was acceptable, at the time it was written, even in the first circles.

In the vexed question of theatrical morality, it must be confessed that the stage has had rather

an unequal battle to fight,—or, more correctly speaking, to sustain; for, in the ample discussions which have taken place, the stage has invariably been upon the defensive. In the opinion of many, the stage has been somewhat unfairly handicapped in these discussions, having been attacked for its sins “before the curtain,” as well as for those emanating from behind.

A few words may suffice in dealing with the offences “before the curtain.” These became most flagrant at the early part of the present century, when the propriety of introducing the younger members of the domestic circle into certain portions of the auditorium became a very grave question with the head of the family, and led to some most virulent attacks upon stage doings. To some extent, no doubt, the “management” was to blame in this matter, by permitting a too unrestricted use of the “free list;” still the audience was in the position, at least, of *particeps criminis*, and might, if so disposed, have reformed itself, instead of calling out loudly for someone else to be reformed. The determined stand, however, which (to his infinite credit be it said) the late Mr. Macready made against this abuse of “the privilege of the

house," was soon followed by other managers, and it is not too much now to aver that whatever there may be that is objectionable before the curtain, the audience itself must be considered the culprit and the stage held blameless.

The other branch of the contention in opposition to the stage, namely, that which deals with offences "behind the curtain," must be met at the outset by frankly accepting the entire responsibility; although, in extenuation, it may be pleaded that in this also the audience is an accessory, for it may be believed that nothing objectionable would be repeated, if once the audience expressed its determined disapprobation. There was a time, indeed, and not so very far distant, when the censorship of plays was virtually in "the hands" of the audience,—when "the pit" decided the fate of a play at its first representation, and this became, for that reason, a most anxious time for the author as well as for actors and manager. Some relic of this state of things is still preserved on the Continent, where even the ratification of the engagement of an artist rests almost entirely upon the verdict of the audience. It is not intended to assert that the audience is, or ever has been, an infallible and

reliable judge, even when almost alone it had to fulfil the duties of public dramatic critic, for instances of mistaken judgment upon plays are sufficiently numerous of themselves to fill a volume, while not a few plays could be named that were at their first representation only coldly received, and which subsequently grew into popularity.

The late Mr. Planché speaking of Richard Brinsley Peake, says that "his farces were usually damned the first night and recovered themselves wonderfully afterwards."

In the days to which allusion has been made, the playwright had first to submit his production to the manager, who in turn handed it to his "reader," and then, if approved so far, the author had to read it aloud in the green-room before the "company" of the theatre. When it had safely passed through this ordeal (provided the various actors considered themselves well suited with "parts,") the acceptance of the play was deemed to be completed, and it was ordered to be copied and put in rehearsal. The public Examiner of Plays, an official under the Lord Chamberlain, has the sole right to exercise the unctions of censor, and he may in that capacity

condemn a play altogether or require certain portions to be altered or expunged before giving his permission for its public performance. The days of the critical supremacy of "the pit" appear to have completely passed away, and managers now, even before the production of a new play, announce that it is to be "repeated every night:" taking it for granted that, after passing the examiner, no further adverse criticism was to be feared. Actors, too, are now more subservient to the wishes of managers than they were in olden times, when the play-going portion of the public were wont to assert the right of giving an opinion as to changes made in the company of a theatre.

It may be within the recollection of many that the late Mr. Lumley, having made a change in the justly celebrated vocal quartett at Her Majesty's Italian Opera House, by substituting Colletti in place of Tamburini for the principal baritone parts, brought upon himself the openly-expressed indignation of a party in what was called "the omnibus" of the theatre; when the malcontents, headed by one of the Royal Princes, commenced such a determined opposition to the performances as effectually prevented the new-

comer being heard, and compelled the manager to reinstate the old favourite.

Whether the arrangements which now prevail, having for their avowed object the preservation of public morals from all contamination from the stage,—fulfil their purpose satisfactorily or not, it is not necessary here to inquire; but it must be acknowledged that there seems to be an increasing tendency towards the production of pieces which would appear to serve little purpose beyond affording a vehicle for indifferent singing, very thinly veiled vulgarity, and equally slightly covered limbs. At the present day the public seems to require little from a theatrical representation beyond some amusement for the passing hour, which shall not need the exertion of any active intelligence. The encouragement offered by the public taste for really good and intellectual plays,—at once moral in tendency, natural in action, and elegant in diction, is at the present moment very small; and possibly to this cause may be attributed the fact that the most distinguished writers of the present day do not turn their attention to productions for the stage. It is not long since a popular manager of one of the large theatres, defending himself from some

unfavourable criticism for not encouraging what is called the "legitimate" drama, openly declared that "to play Shakespeare meant to court bankruptcy." This would seem, if a just opinion, to point to a sad falling off in the intellectual taste of theatrical audiences ; but it may also be taken as opening up another phase of the question, which suggests as a reason for the present neglect of the higher walks of the drama, that the representations obtainable at the present day are not adequate to the occasion. At the latter part of the last and the beginning of the present century, actors were trained and educated in their profession through the dramatic classics ; and their natural gifts, however conspicuous, were not alone considered sufficient to entitle them to the approbation of an audience, while attempting to present the intellectual drama of the time. Managers, when they venture now to present the legitimate drama, content themselves with mounting the play with one, or at most two competent actors, and fill up the rest of the parts as best they may. That there is a public still to be found sufficiently imbued with the love of all that is good and great in dramatic literature to support worthy representations of the

highest and most poetical dramatic works, is proved by at least one notable instance ; although it must be conceded that even in this case the circumstances attending this highly successful example have been exceptionally advantageous.

In confirmation of the fact of the direct and powerful influence which the audience in former times exercised upon theatrical management and performances, it will not be necessary or desirable to adduce the evidence of the celebrated " O. P. Riots ; " this chapter of dramatic history is already too well known, and has been too often quoted. The following, however, will serve the same purpose, and as the event recorded took place many years anterior to the Covent Garden riots, the account is probably not so familiar to the play-goer of the present day.

During Mr. Fleetwood's management of Drury Lane Theatre, which continued from 1734 to 1745, two riots took place, the second of which is thus described by Mr. Benjamin Victor, in his *History of the Theatres of London and Dublin* :—

" The second riot was about the manager's continuing raised prices to old entertainments. . . . It was not uncommon for prices to be raised at the introduction of a new play or panto-

mime, when it was supposed that £1,000 or upwards were generally expended in the decoration of those raree-shows ; but in the case before us, full prices were demanded and taken for an old pantomime of no manner of merit. After two or three nights' disturbances, a country gentleman was taken out of one of the upper boxes by the constables, for hissing, and was carried before Justice Deveil, who was, however, too cunning to meddle in the affair. This injudicious step was soon known by the audience, and was very near being the occasion of much mischief. The manager was called for by the audience ; but not being an actor, he pleaded his privilege of being exempted from appearing on the stage before them, and sent them word by one of the performers that he was ready to confer with any they should depute to meet him in the green-room. A deputation accordingly went from the pit, and the house patiently awaited the event, which was amicably ended as follows, viz. that the full prices should be paid at the doors, and such persons as did not choose to stay the 'entertainment' [the second piece so called] and went out at the end of the play, should have the advance-money returned."

The following, from the same writer, gives some further insight into the authority of the Lord Chamberlain and his jurisdiction in theatrical matters. The observations quoted also introduce the account of another instance of the forcible assertion of the self-imposed judicial powers of the audience, which did not terminate in so peaceful a manner as that just related. It will also be noted that the feeling of discontent was much aggravated by the action of the authorities being taken as a blow levelled at the general rights of the public; indeed, the narrator says that "an attack upon the liberty of the press" was feared.

"In the year 1738 there was a motion made in the House of Commons for a Licensing Act, which met with great opposition in both Houses of Parliament. When His Majesty's comedians were constantly sworn into his service at the Lord Chamberlain's office, and wore the king's livery, they became, no doubt, from that instant, within his jurisdiction; and as in the earliest days there were laws to punish vagrants and strolling minstrels (Edward III. and Henry IV.), it was necessary, when there were six theatres at one time in London, that

every one should be under the protection of some prince of the blood or nobleman, and they performed as his servants. . . . The public did not complain of the Lord Chamberlain's power over the players, but over the authors who wrote for the stage ; and from the eloquent speech of a noble earl against that Bill when brought into the House of Lords, it was much feared an attack upon the liberty of the press would follow ; and though it might be necessary to limit the number of theatres, yet they thought that might have been done without giving such dangerous powers to a licenser. . . . A certain Justice was at this time in the possession of the 'little theatre in the Haymarket,' where he dealt about his satires most unmercifully against the First Minister of State. As the reasons for urging the necessity for passing that Bill were notorious, it met with a majority in both Houses, and passed into a law to limit the number of theatres in London ; and that no play, not even a prologue, epilogue, or song, should be exhibited at either theatre without being first inspected, and having the approbation of the licenser. In pursuance of this Act of Parliament, the new theatre in Goodman's Fields was shut up, as

well as the little theatre in the Haymarket, and two new manuscript tragedies the ensuing season were prohibited by the licenser. . . . During the murmuring at these Acts of Parliament, a company of French strollers were licensed to act in the theatre in the Haymarket, the words 'by authority' appearing at the head of the advertisement! People went early to the theatre, and in the pit were two Westminster Justices, Deveil and Manning. One of the leaders of the Opposition called for the song in praise of *English* roast beef, which was sung in the gallery, the whole house joining in the chorus. Justice Deveil then addressed the house, pointing out that as the King had commanded the play it was opposing the King's authority to resist, and if persisted in he must read the proclamation and call in the guards, who were in waiting. To these arbitrary threatenings it was replied, that the audience had a legal right to show their dislike to any play or actor, that the judicature of the pit had been acknowledged. When the curtain drew up, the actors were discovered standing between two files of Grenadiers with fixed bayonets, resting on their firelocks! At this, the whole pit rose, and turned to the Justices to

demand the reason of such proceedings. The Justices declared they knew nothing of the arrangement, and it was then demanded of Deveil, who owned himself the commanding officer, that he should order the soldiers from the stage. This having been done, the serenade began. Cat-calls, and all the various portable instruments that could make a disagreeable noise were brought up, and were continually tuning in all parts of the house. All attempts at speaking being ridiculous, the actors retired, and a grand dance was commenced, when a bushel or two of peas thrown at the dancers rendered their capering unsafe. After a repetition of threats and remonstrances, the noise continued, interspersed with calling out for the fall of the curtain. At last this was complied with."

Whatever may be the objections urged against the stage, and whether justly or unjustly, it is quite certain that nothing can be alleged against the practice of *private representations* of dramatic works in the home, and before an audience composed of the members of the family circle and the friends of the house ; supposing, of course,

the plays to be judiciously chosen. Here the home virtues stand in no danger of being compromised, but, on the contrary, a kindly spirit of painstaking and intelligent emulation is engendered. Indeed, no better or more fascinating means of intellectual training could be suggested for the younger members of a household. By this means the memory becomes strengthened, the principles of elocution are acquired and developed, the vocal organs are exercised, and gracefulness of bearing and ease of manner are inculcated and practised. The feelings of gratification caused by the wholesome activity in giving and acknowledging pleasure which such occasions call forth, are in themselves advantages not to be despised; but possibly the principal enjoyment, as well as the most beneficial as a matter of culture, is that occasioned by having in an agreeable manner, to make the intimate acquaintance of some of the choicest examples of the dramatic literature of the country. For this reason alone the private performance of dramatic works may well be pronounced the most intellectual and refined of pastimes.

“*Private Theatricals*” have, in the estimation of most of us, the additional advantage of being

sanctioned both by Church and State. Royalty has ever had a partiality for dramatic representations, and Windsor Castle and Hampton Court Palace have frequently been the scenes of Court Plays. The present Bishop of Manchester has also, on more than one occasion, stoutly defended the Stage, while a former Dean of Westminster—Dr. Headly—employed Hogarth to paint scenes for his private theatre. The Inns of Court, also,—those “seats of learning,” set apart for the “study and practice of the law,” were in olden times much given to theatrical performances; and their halls, now almost exclusively devoted to the purposes of the banquet, were then the frequent scene of histrionic representations. On the score of intellectuality, the modern cannot be considered any improvement upon the old purposes to which these ancient halls were devoted.

The fascinating occupation of being engaged in private theatricals has been spoken of as if specially intended for the younger members of the household; but experience has shown that the head of the family, as well as his contemporaries, may join in the delightful occupation with unalloyed pleasure to themselves, with

manifest advantage to the success of the representation, and with enjoyment to all concerned whether before or behind the curtain.

In the following pages advice and instruction will be given, from an ample experience, as to the best means to be adopted for converting, "at short notice," a library or drawing-room into a suitable arena for the occasional display and development of whatever histrionic talent may be found in the family circle. Lessons in impromptu stage-carpentering will be added, together with arrangements for painting the necessary scenery, and for the procuring all the customary stage appliances. The important subject of lighting will not be forgotten, neither will the labours of the amateur costumier and property-man be neglected. The band, always for such occasions ostentatiously declared to be "complete in every department," will receive due attention; and the duties of manager, even to the drawing-up and posting of placards, will be fully explained. Some useful hints on the subject of elocution, the management of the voice, and "stage-walk" will also be given. In short, "no expense will be spared" both by pen and pencil, to render every facility to the

“company,” selected with considerable judgment from “the entire household,” in the due performance of their self-imposed task; and in return the author and artist make this one stipulation, that on such occasions they shall be included in the “free list.”

CHAPTER II.

STAGE CARPENTRY AND LIGHTING.

THE simplest form of arrangement for a private stage is, of course, that which was adopted in what are still sometimes called "the good old days" of dramatic literature,—before the introduction of scenic appliances, and when actors, no matter what might be the character impersonated, appeared in their every-day apparel. To revive this custom, all that would be needed for our "private theatricals" would be an ample cloth suspended at the back of the stage, after the manner of what is technically called a "flat," upon which should be affixed a tolerably conspicuous label, informing the audience of the locality in which the action is supposed to take place. Add to this some imitation of the Greek

chorus, to explain between the scenes the action and purport of the play, and theatrical representation would be reduced to the most primitive and facile arrangements.

The difficulties of the scenery, for instance, of John Howard Payne's comedy, *Charles the Second*, may thus be overcome by providing these placards :

THE ROYAL PALACE.

OUTSIDE
COPP'S TAVERN,
"THE GRAND ADMIRAL."

A ROOM
IN
COPP'S HOUSE.

These would indicate all that the audience requires to be told as to the locality of the action of the play.

Such procedure, however, would, it is believed, scarcely meet the taste of the present generation of amateurs, and the following directions are framed with a view to more ambitious efforts at private dramatic performances, where the aim is to afford every facility for acquiring, as far as

practicable, the most modern appliances of the art.

Another almost equally simple means of preparation for stage purposes, and which is applicable to almost any ordinary private room, may be thus described. Let the pianoforte be moved so that the player shall sit with his back to the further wall, or that side of the room where the window is usually placed. On each side of the piano place a chair with its back towards the front part of the room. Now rest on the seats of the chairs the feet of a kitchen clothes-horse, which, resting between the back of the piano and the backs of the chairs, will be kept firmly in upright position. On the clothes-horse hang an ample curtain reaching to the floor, and it will be at once seen that the room is very considerably altered in appearance, and two good exits are provided, one on each side of the curtain. To make the thing still more complete, add on each side a screen with two leaves; cover each with drapery, and a very fair impromptu stage has been produced, which will be quite sufficient for many little domestic pieces in one scene.

In what follows it will be supposed that a

double drawing-room of moderate size, with folding doors dividing the two rooms, has been chosen for the theatre; the front room being intended for the auditorium, and the back room for the stage. If this back room should happen to be provided with a French window opening on to a balcony, with a flight of steps leading into a garden, it will be all the better for its new purpose. The next step is to call in the aid of the house-carpenter to arrange the proscenium and the necessary fittings for the stage and scenery.

The natural place for the proscenium is the opening or division between the two rooms; and as every ordinary peculiarity of the room is to be, as far as possible, rendered available in this process of conversion, the folding-doors are to be thrown back so far as to form a slope from the opening, and thus on each side become the face of the proscenium. This will help the appearance of distance between the stage and the audience, and materially aid the general effect. The foot-lights will also contribute to this end, and the actors will find this strong line of demarcation very beneficial in their efforts at assuming the various characters. It may be found that the position of the folding-door on the side

nearest the hall may interfere with the entrance of the audience from the hall into the "house," and the entrance-door must therefore be in its turn thrown back. If the exposure to draught from the hall should thus be rendered objectionable, a curtain may be hung over the doorway. The simplest, and at the same time most effectual, way to manage this, is to fix two staples or eyes into the woodwork over the door, and through the eyes pass a slight iron rod, upon which to hang the curtain.

Where any attempt at scenery is made, a framework will be necessary in order to arrange entrances and exits on and off the stage, and the following is believed to be the most simple and economical plan. The little carpentry which this involves will not, however, be beyond the ability of any moderately handy person in the family. Whether the scenes are supplied by simple drapery judiciously displayed, or ordinary covered screens are utilized for the purpose, a rod will be required to be fixed along each side of the upper part of the stage. For this purpose procure four lengths of deal, two inches in substance and three inches wide, of the length of the room from the proscenium to the back, and

in each length of the wood cut a slot or mortice to receive the end of an upright. Four uprights will be required of such length as may be found suitable to the height of the room. There will then be provided two frames, one for each side of the stage, and the next business is to put them up and render them self-supporting. Now drive two eyes into the upper portion of the frame on each side, and a stout iron rod with about three inches at each end bent down as a hook and passed into the eyes, will effectually hold the frames firmly in their places. The substance of these iron rods should be not less than three quarters of an inch in diameter, as besides supporting the frame, they will have to support whatever canvas scenes or drapery may be used.

Everything is now prepared for the arrangements for providing entrances and exits upon the stage. If possible there must be, at least, one entrance on each side and one at the back—the latter technically called “up the stage.” The side entrances must be secured by a “wing” or “side scene,” suspended from one of the iron-rods; but for the entrance “up the stage,” the window and balcony will be available. As the space is necessarily very much curtailed on the

side of the stage usually occupied by the ordinary fire-place, this side will, as far as possible, have to be reserved for what may be called temporary exits. If an entrance cannot be avoided from that side, the actor must be in concealment before the scene is opened and remain there till the cue for entrance be given. These are matters which will again have to be referred to in another chapter, when speaking of stage management.

It is unnecessary here to allude to that part of the duty of the stage carpenter, which, more than any other, gives scope for the inventive faculty of the professional artisan, namely, the construction of the "traps" and "tricks," which are indispensable in a pantomime; such performances would scarcely come within the range of *private* theatricals. A successful attempt at presenting a pantomime is remembered, given in a schoolroom, where clown and pantaloon were played by two ex-choristers of Westminster Abbey; and a well-known stationer in the neighbourhood, who has since become a public lecturer, took another of the parts.

It is now necessary to return to the subject of the proscenium and the carpentry necessary for

the arrangements for the foot-lights. For this purpose two planks are to be provided of half-inch deal, nine inches in width, cut the exact size to fit in the opening between the folding doors. They are to be secured together at right angles so as to form two sides of a trough. Pieces of angle-iron, such as are used for corners of boxes will answer admirably, and two of these will be sufficient. This trough will make a receptacle for the foot-lights, and serve to protect them as well as the carpet (a matter of no slight importance) from danger by accident. It may be advisable further to protect the lights on the stage side with wire-netting, which will also effectually keep the actresses' dresses from dangerous proximity to the light. Where a change of hue is desired to be thrown over the entire stage, a gauze of any required colour can be introduced in front of the foot-lights, which will give the effect contemplated. The lighting of the stage is a very important matter, and demands considerable attention. Where gas is laid on throughout the house, this will perhaps be the most convenient form of lighting. Two iron gas-pipes of the necessary length for foot-lights and head-lights will have to be provided, and in

these pipes small holes for jets should be punched or drilled, at a distance of about nine inches apart. A better plan, and one which entails but little further expense, would be to have fish-tail burners inserted in the pipes instead of merely punching holes, which will ensure a more regular supply of gas. In addition to this means of illumination, lights will be required upon the stage, and for this purpose oil-lamps will be less costly than having to make further gas alterations in the room. The two gas-pipes above mentioned will have to be connected by means of flexible tubes, with whatever ordinary gas-burners may be available.

If wax-candles or oil-lamps be the method of illumination adopted, some alterations of the above arrangements will, of course, be necessary. The head-light or "float" being inadmissible with either lamps or candles, the side-lights will have to be very considerably strengthened. On either side of the stage behind the proscenium there must be provided a strong light, either by portable lamps or by wax-candles. The disposition of the light is a very important matter, not only for the effect of the scenes, but also particularly for the appearance of the actors. It

should be borne in mind that if the foot-light be overpowering, and not counterbalanced by equally brilliant side-lights, a ghastly appearance will be given to the countenances of the actors, which all are agreed is very unbecoming. When the play is in course of performance, the effect of the lighting of the stage will be considerably enhanced by throwing the auditorium into partial shade.

Reflectors may be advantageously employed, and tin-foil paper, which may be saved up in the household from the tea packages, make a capital reflecting material, only second to polished tin or other metal. The paper should be laid smooth, and fastened on pieces of slight wooden board or stiff pasteboard. For the foot-lights this tin-foil paper should be pasted on the inner side of the wooden trough previously mentioned. A form of lamp which will be found very useful, and not expensive, is that made with a tin reflector at the back, and intended for burning paraffin or other mineral oil. A good moderator lamp for burning colza oil, for the back of the proscenium on either side, is a most satisfactory mode of lighting.

In some plays the effect of a situation greatly

depends upon the sudden turning up of a lamp, and in a theatre this is done by turning the gas up fully, after the stage has been for a time partially obscured. If gas be the form of illumination, this can also be done in private performances, but where lamps or candles have been chosen for the lighting, the stage must be darkened by a dark-green gauze screen placed in front of the lights, and removed at the proper instant. This is a matter that will require careful rehearsal and arrangement.

The next thing to be thought of is "the curtain," which will require some little management. A pair of curtains should be hung, by means of rings, upon a brass or iron rod at the top of the proscenium. To the two rings that meet in the centre a cord should be fastened, with the two ends long enough to enable the curtain to be drawn and closed by a person at the outer side of the curtain. The two ends of each cord should be run through all the other rings by which the curtains are suspended, and one end of each cord to hang down at the side of the proscenium. The curtains, instead of going up and down, will be drawn sideways, opening in the centre, and the duty of drawing and closing

the curtain may be entrusted to two of the younger members of the family.

The foregoing observations upon amateur stage-carpentry have been applied, so far, only to the smallest, although, at the same time, most readily accessible form which a private dwelling affords; and the arrangements are such as have a tendency to reduce to a minimum the unavoidable disturbance of rooms from their normal or domestic condition. Where, however, a school-room, for instance, is at disposal for the purpose, and an arrangement can be made for the performances to take place during the holiday season, a complete series of performances might be inaugurated, and the whole thing managed upon a more extensive and perfect scale. In this case all fear of injury to carpets and "household goods" in general, will be avoided, to the manifest ease of mind of *Mater Familias*. There may also be the possible additional advantage of one or two beams crossing the apartment, of which the stage-carpenter will well know how to avail himself. The bare floor, too, is another boon to this anxious and important individual, as he can then make use of iron braces, screwed into the floor with thumb-screws, for the support of the

upright portions of the frame for holding the scenes ; the increased space at command on the stage will also very considerably help the action, at the same time that it will afford greater scope for scenic effects. There is one reflection recalling to mind the impediment arising from the consideration of the necessary cost of such entertainments ; amounting, in cases where the expenses all come out of one pocket, to positive prohibition. If, however, the performances could be undertaken for the benefit of some benevolent object, the expenses might, by judicious and prudent management, not only be all defrayed without unnecessary burden to any individual, but a balance handed over in the cause of charity.

The suggestion, also, will unsolicited present itself to the mind that when the performance is confined to a single representation of a play, the result is not commensurate with the exertions and pains taken to procure it—in other words, that “ the game is not worth the candle ” ; but if the school-room arrangement of performances for some charitable object can be adopted, the objection is removed—the necessary zest is given to the labours of all concerned, and a positive good to others is provided.

It must be remembered, however, that where money be taken "at the doors," the rights of the author of the play will have to be considered, and the question of dramatic license to be met. The Dramatic Authors' Society should always be communicated with, when the performances are of a public character, and admission is by payment. Mr. J. Palgrave Simpson, 28, King Street, London, W.C., is the proper person to whom to apply, and the fees vary from about 7s. 6d. per act, depending upon the length and other circumstances, the price for playing in the provinces being less than for town. When the performance is strictly private, and admission is only by tickets, any play can be performed without charge.

CHAPTER III.

SCENERY AND FURNITURE.

INIGO JONES, who, besides decorating the stage of his time with the work of his brush in painting scenes, seems also to have invented some of the earliest stage machinery used in the masques, which were the popular form of dramatic entertainment of the period. Jonson, speaking of one of his masques performed at Whitehall on "Twelfth Night, 1605," thus describes the scene:—

"For the scene was drawn a landscape, consisting of small woods, and here and there void places filled with hangings, which falling, an artificial sea was seen to shoot forth, as if it flowed to the land, raised with waves which seemed to move, and in some places the billows

to break, as imitating that orderly disorder which is common in nature."

Considerable pains were in those days taken to "decorate the stage," thus contributing to make the production of a masque, when presented before the Court, a terribly expensive affair; yet movable scenes, such as those with which we are now familiar, were unknown. A cloth or piece of tapestry was the usual background for the stage, and whatever aids to the imagination might be required to present the scene before the mind, were conveyed by the verbal descriptions furnished by the author through the mouths of the actors. The modern stage, owing to the greater skill now shown in the direction of realistic effects, has lost to authors the opportunity, indeed the necessity, for the cultivation of the talent for description which the older plays undoubtedly possessed.

De Louthembourg, who is more celebrated as being Garrick's scene-painter than for his having been an exhibitor of paintings at the Royal Academy, effected some marked improvements in scenic appliances. He was the first to introduce "set scenes," and to arrange changes from night to day in the same scene by inventing trans-

parent scenes illuminated from behind. He also, by the use of different coloured gauzes in front of the foot-lights, contrived to throw a corresponding variety of hue over the scene.

Thus much by way of brief preface to the practical part of the subject of scene-painting.

The preparation of scenery is perhaps the most difficult, as well as most laborious part of the work of providing for private theatricals; at least if specially-painted scenes are to be attempted. The most simple and easily-managed contrivances, however, shall be first given, and afterwards the details mentioned of more elaborate ventures.

When folding-screens are used for the purpose of scenic arrangement, they should be covered on the two sides with different patterns of ordinary wall paper, one suitable for a drawing-room, and one intended for an apartment of less pretension. The selection of papers will depend upon the exigency of the play to be mounted. This arrangement will provide for two distinct scenes, and a third may be contrived by throwing draperies over the screens. Still further changes may be made by altering the disposition of the

stage furniture ; a small picture hung upon each of the screens will also add to the effect.

For the clothes-horse arrangement suggested in a previous chapter, breadths of wall-paper may be pasted together, secured to a wooden roller, and fastened to the top of the horse. If the cheap form of painters' canvas be provided, two different papers may be pasted, one on each side, and thus provision may be made for two scenes.

Either of these arrangements will suffice where the action of the play is confined to domestic scenes ; but when the scene is laid partly indoors and partly in a garden, a more elaborate preparation will be desirable, and all the artistic talent of the home must be called into requisition.

Fortunately there are comparatively few families that do not possess at least one member having some knowledge of drawing, and the instructions here given will enable that knowledge to be turned to the best account. It is not for a moment intended to convey the impression that scene-painting is so easy a matter that anyone with a slight smattering of drawing can readily accomplish it ; on the contrary, it is a very distinct branch of art that requires special training

and experience to attain any marked success. When it is remembered that Clarkson Stansfield, Beverley, Lloyd, and other celebrated artists of modern times, have not considered it beneath their talents to engage in scene-painting, it may readily be believed that, although a distinct, it cannot be considered an inferior branch of art. Still, if the general principles be well understood, and too ambitious ideas avoided, failure need not be too conspicuous.

A modern writer has said that "It is a mistake to attempt much scenery in ordinary private theatricals," and that "a great deal of the amusement consists in plotting and contriving;" yet more than one instance may be cited where a moderately successful effort of amateur scene-painting has given considerable enjoyment to the audience, and helped the representation immensely.

An instance is, indeed, recalled to mind, where, in a private house of not by any means large dimensions, after the fall of the curtain upon a comedy in which practically difficult scenes had been attempted, the audience were not a little curious to examine more closely into the contrivances that had been employed in pro-

ducing a very satisfactory result. The play was *Love in a Maze*, and in the fifth act a practical maze is required, and was arranged. The amateur scenic-artist should be told that to attempt what is called "pretty" drawing, with elaborate detail, is about the greatest mistake he could make; bold effects and good contrasts of light and shade are the things to aim at. It should also be remembered that the scene is to be inspected from a few feet distance, and that this space will be apparently increased by a strong light being thrown upon the canvas. A good deal of the work will therefore have to be done on a large and vigorous scale.

The painting of a back scene or "flat" is the first thing to be attempted, and for this a canvas of the required dimensions must be procured and suspended. Coarse calico may, if more convenient, be substituted for canvas. This must first be brushed over with a thin solution of common size and whiting. The size must, of course, be melted in a little water and heated. A rough drawing having first been made upon paper, the outline of the scene will have to be lightly sketched on the prepared canvas in charcoal. The colours must not be mixed in oil, as

this would give a glazed appearance, attracting the light unequally, and therefore destroying the effect. Distemper, or "flatting," is the style of work for the purpose. Water, in which size has been dissolved, must be used for mixing the colours, which should be laid on with large tools or brushes. The first neutral tint will be found to work up better if laid on with a brush almost as large as a white-wash brush. Next lay on the deeper tints, putting in the blues for the sky, and the chrome-yellow for the sunny foreground. The general tone of the different parts of the picture having been thus given on the canvas, the outlines of the trees, buildings, and other objects have to be put in, and, last of all, those finishing or "magical" touches, upon which the effect of the picture so much depends. Two suggestions for scenes are given, which will prove useful as back scenes. The artist will notice that as the landscape scene is intended for the back of the stage, and gives the distant view, there is an absence of the broad effects required in the foreground of an ordinary picture. This necessary addition to the effect of the picture must be given by means of "wings" or side scenes.

The Landscape Scene will serve for the back of

an out-door scene, and will also make a capital finish to a drawing-room scene, when shown through an open door or window draped with laced curtains, and will afford as well a good stage entrance.

For the side scenes, a slip of canvas pasted down upon thick packing or brown paper, for each side of the stage, upon which is painted a stone vase with a shrub or large flower, will suffice, or a trellis covered with a climbing shrub may be painted, or the bold trunk of a tree. Another arrangement of side-scene may be made by a slip of paper painted with light blue at the top, shaded down into a grey at the bottom, in front of which place a natural flower or shrub in a large pot. This will give quite a realistic effect to the scene. The stage-carpenter must cut out the edge of the "wings" or side scenes, called "marking the profile."

The second illustration,—A Village Inn,—will also be found a useful suggestion for a back scene, but will, of course, require wings of a totally different character to those just described. If the exigencies of the play to be performed demand a village inn with practical porch, the scene must be slightly altered from the sketch

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given. Extend the background of the sketch so as to occupy nearly the whole of the flat, giving only the wall of the inn up to the porch. The wing is then to take the rest of the inn with the porch cut out ; set the wing three feet away from the flat, and the practical entrance is secured. The title of the inn, "The Black Bull," can, of course, be easily altered to suit any play, by pasting up another sign-board on the scene.

If another scene be wanted, the following will be found very useful for what is called a "costume play," and will also serve equally well for domestic plays.

This may be the Interior of a Baronial-Hall, representing wainscoted panels, ornamented with massive carving, and decorated with implements of the chase, antique armour, &c. A practical door may be made in the centre, or an opening left, which draped with a heavy curtain will be quite in keeping with the scene. It will be found that this will not by any means be a difficult scene to paint, and will be very effective. There are, it is believed, some wall-papers to be had, which may be hung upon a canvas or upon a screen, that would answer the purpose of this scene very well, or some of the objects—knights

in armour, for instance—may be cut out and pasted on a plain ground, the lines for the panels being put in by hand. Stencilling may be resorted to for this scene, and will be found to facilitate the work, particularly where figures or ornaments have to be multiplied.

The customary furniture of our ideal room has next to be considered in the process of conversion into stage and auditorium.

All the chairs, the sofas, and settees, will have to be taken into the front room for the accommodation of the audience. The tables and other large pieces of furniture must be otherwise disposed, if the audience is expected to be large; but the pianoforte must remain in the front room for the "band," unless the arrangement for utilising it on the stage, as has been previously suggested, be adopted. If, however, the rooms can be so long spared from their ordinary domestic purposes, it would be better to repeat the entertainment to a fresh audience on another night, rather than, by having too large an attendance for one night, inconvenience the visitors. An audience to be appreciative must be in good humour, and as it has an almost equally important part itself to play in giving encouragement

to the actors and actresses, its comfort must be considered.

As to the furniture of the stage, the less there is of it and the less cumbrous it is, the better. Even the chairs should be as light and portable as possible, and cane-bottomed ones, completely enveloped in chintz coverings, are most eligible and would suit almost any scene. A dressing-table, not too large, covered with drapery, will economise space, and if a second table be required, it should be of some light fancy description. For some plays a couch will be indispensable, and should be placed at the side of the stage, where it will be equally available for the action and will not occupy too much room.

In everything the aim should be to make the stage scene look as natural as possible. Nothing should present the appearance of being merely a "property." The table may have a lamp upon it, but this should not be lighted if the action takes place in the day; or some books or a photograph on stand, or any ornament may be used. Real flowers or shrubs in pots add greatly to the appearance, and may sometimes be arranged to help out the scenery very satisfactorily.

The effect of a garden scene will be improved

by laying down a piece of green drugget over the ordinary carpet; for a room scene the carpet of the room will suffice.

CHAPTER IV.

DRESSES AND MAKING-UP.—MANAGER AND PROMPTER.

It must be manifest that the question of dress depends entirely upon the character and requirements of the play which may be selected. Many of the pieces which are generally considered most suitable for private representation are those which do not, in costume, need any change from the ordinary dress of the day. To select a play from this class will, no doubt, save everyone concerned not only a great deal of trouble, but some expense also, and it is fortunate for those who entertain such economical views that there are a considerable number of plays of this class, from which a selection may be made. What are called "costume" plays, or those which are either his-

torical or deal with events and persons in some foreign country, and therefore need special dresses, are, it must be admitted, more expensive to mount, and the choice, therefore, in nine cases out of ten, has generally been in favour of little domestic dramas of the period.

There is, however, a great deal to be said in favour of "costume" plays, showing advantages which, in the opinion of some, quite compensate for the extra expense and trouble involved.

In the first place, it must be admitted that it is far less difficult to assume and pourtray feelings and sentiments beyond the routine of every day life, if, with the new character the actor also adopts a novel dress.

The influence of dress, both upon the wearer and the looker-on, is proverbial—from the Red Indian, who never dreams of going into battle till he has put on the war-paint, to the fashionable *exquisite*, who would expire if seen abroad in dishabille. Everyone will remember the appropriate story of Papa Haydn, as the great German composer was called, who would never sit down to write unless arrayed in all his best and wearing his choicest jewelry.

The late Mr. Planché gives an account of a

conversation with Charles Kemble, manager of one of the large theatres, in which he urged upon Kemble the artistic injustice involved in spending, perhaps, £1,000 upon the production of a new pantomime or Easter piece, and reviving a play of Shakespeare's with, perhaps, only new dresses for one or two of the principal characters. This conversation led to Planché undertaking gratuitously to make the necessary research, designing the dresses, and superintending the production of "King John," with more attention to historical correctness than had previously been attempted. The innovation thus introduced was not, however, at all relished by the actors, and Planché thus relates the result of his amateur labours as stage manager :—

"Nothing but the fact that the classical features of a Kemble were to be surmounted by a precisely similar abomination (the *chapeaux de fer*) would, I think, have induced one of the rebellious barons to have appeared in it. When the curtain rose and discovered King John dressed as his effigy appears in Worcester Cathedral, surrounded by his barons sheathed in mail, with cylindrical helmets and correct armorial shields, and his courtiers in the long tunics and mantles

of the thirteenth century, there was a roar of approbation !"—*Planché's Recollections*.

The inference to be drawn from this incident points pretty plainly to the importance of dress in public estimation, and valuable as dress is admitted to be at all times, it is, perhaps, of more consequence in private theatricals than in any circumstance or position in which we may happen to be placed. Who, for instance, among the audience would be likely to believe in Rob Roy or Cardinal Richelieu if played in evening dress ; or who so dressed could play the parts with any chance of interesting a modern audience, or with comfort to himself ? Not but that anxiety in the matter of dress, as in almost everything else, may be carried to the extreme of absurdity, as will be called to mind by those who have read of the eccentricities of the celebrated amateur who was known by the name of "Romeo" Coutts, who expressed his great solicitude for the costly dress he wore while playing the part, by arranging the folds of his tunic with care, before the audience, preparatory to dying respectably.

The dress and surroundings, besides aiding the efforts of the actor, have also not a little to do with the enjoyment of the audience, and

incongruities become painfully obvious when the language, the scene, and the costumes are unsuitable to each other. It is quite certain that if the council chamber (to give another well-known instance) were to be represented by a modern sitting-room, and the Venetian senators enacted by the members of the family in their every-day costume, it would take a considerable amount of imagination and "go" for the Moor impressively to address his

"Most potent, grave, and reverend signors."

These, however, are considerations that must be left to the judgment of the company and the manager, who, "weighing well the cost," both in labour and money, must decide the momentous question as to whether the piece selected shall be a modern domestic drama or a costume play. If the former be decided upon, and the scene laid in England, the labour of mounting the piece will be considerably lessened, and there is only one piece of advice which will suggest itself, and that is to avoid any play that may happen to be before the public at the time, or to have been only recently performed. However clever and good amateurs may be, it is unwise to

suggest comparison with actors who have, besides other great advantages, the important one of constant rehearsal.

There are two ways of dressing a costume play—one, to hire the dresses from a theatrical costumier, and the other for the actors and actresses to make their own!

The advantage of the first-named method is that all trouble is avoided; but unless considerable expense be incurred, even this plan is not always satisfactory. Stock dresses are unfortunately often liable to be a long way from perfection, in the matter either of fit or of suitability to the character.

The other alternative, to mount the play with

“NEW DRESSES MADE FOR THE OCCASION

AFTER DRAWINGS BY MR. H. B. PENCIL,

whose services have been specially retained,”

is really not so formidable a business as it would at first sight appear; and if only average talent be displayed, the result will be sure to be appreciated by the audience. The most picturesque and elegant of costumes—that of the Charles the First period, commonly called the Vandyke,

because adopted by that painter for his portraits—can be easily made in materials that are far from costly. Cheap coloured merino or calico, when tastily made up, produce very good-looking stage attire, and these materials lend themselves very satisfactorily to the ornamental style of dress of the period just mentioned. A bright-coloured alpaca will make a capital substitute for a silk dress; and common lace of a large pattern is, for stage purposes, as effective as the real thing. For the elaborate brocades of the time of the Georges, figured chintz is an admirable stage imitation, and glazed calico will also be found useful. When old age has to be adopted, the male dress should be worn rather ample in dimensions, thus giving a shrunken appearance to the figure.

If historical correctness be determined upon, an unfailing source of reliable information is to be found in Planché's *History of British Costume*.

In all accounts that have appeared of really successful private performances, there has always been a Stage Manager. Indeed, the services of such an officer,—if possessing tact and good temper, and armed with absolute authority,—are

more important than amateurs generally are disposed to admit. He it is who should select the play, distribute the parts, and superintend all the rehearsals. It will be better, if it can be so arranged, that the stage manager should not be distracted by having a part to play; his time will thus be more completely devoted to managerial duties, and his decisions will, for that reason, be more likely to be credited with impartiality.

The "manager," besides being a post of honour and importance, is also one of great antiquity. In the reign of King Henry VIII., he was appointed under the title of Master and Yeoman of the Revels. The Licenser of Plays also dates back to the same period, and, as may be expected, his office and the exercise of his duties have been particularly unpalatable to those persons with whom he was brought in contact. In addition to this, the Privy Council itself did not consider it derogatory to their dignity to control the doings of the stage: indeed, this authority was at one time strained so far as to be extended to the performances of those actors who were specially retained by the nobility for their own edification.

The one great stumbling-block to the success of private theatricals may be said to be the foolish opinion, still unfortunately too prevalent, that rehearsals are not necessary, and should be voted a bore. The following observations are equally applicable to the present as to the time when Booth, Cibber, and Wilks were the managers at Drury Lane Theatre, mentioned by Mr. Victor in his *History of the Theatres of London and Dublin* (1730).

“ Their judgment appeared in their regular and masterly manner of governing their rehearsals, over which one of the three managers presided weekly. If a new play were coming on, the first three readings fell to the share of the author. The readings over, there followed a limited number of rehearsals with their parts in their hands ; after which, a distant morning was appointed for every person in the play to appear perfect, because the rehearsals only then begin to be of use to the actor. When he is quite perfect in the words and cues, he can then be instructed in proper entrances, emphasis, attitudes, and exits.”

If the manager be an active person, and “ up to his work,” the company cannot do better than

submit all matters to his direction ; and he will, in his turn, if blessed with the equable temper so necessary for his post, know how to accept any suggestions that may be offered by his actors. He should select the play most suitable for his company, distribute the parts, and direct the rehearsals. To aid him in his selection, a list of plays is given, with some useful particulars as to their respective requirements.

The directions for exits and entrances are given with many of the plays that are to be purchased, but they may need some modification when played in private. The position of the actors on the stage is ordinarily given by letters, thus :—

O. P. (opposite Prompter). P. S. (Prompter's side).

R.	R. C.	C.	L. C.	L.
Right.		Centre.		Left.

U. being used for "Upper"—thus, R. U. E. (Right-hand Upper Entrance).

The manager should also exercise his judgment as to the acting of the members of his company, and should be able to instruct and advise.

Successful "making-up" is a science in itself; but it will not be necessary to attempt much in this way for "private" performances. The necessity for colouring the face at all arises from

stage-lighting being exceptionally bright and strong, and because of the upward direction given to the illumination from the foot-lights. The result of this is effectually to "blanch the cheek" and give a ghastly appearance to the face. A very little rouge on the cheek, put on with a hare's foot (the orthodox instrument for use in making-up, as being soft to a proverb), and the eye-brows darkened with a camel-hair pencil, will in most cases be found sufficient. When age is to be represented, a grey wig, wrinkles painted (not too heavily) across the forehead, lines traced from the corners of the eyes, delicately laid on, to resemble crow's-feet, and the eye-brows thickly powdered with flour or toilet-powder, will make the required change. The amateur should be cautioned against overdoing this part of his preparation, as the comparatively small arena available will bring the audience very close, and give them facilities for being unpleasantly critical. Another piece of advice is to use the simplest and most harmless materials for colouring the face. Those already indicated are quite safe, and in cleaning them off afterwards it is well to apply a little sweet-oil, as this will assist the removal of the colour without irritating the skin.

There is invariably a person in public theatres specially appointed to take charge of the "stage properties," and whose duty it is to have them in readiness at the wings, so as to give them to the actor as he goes on the stage. Such articles as letters, parcels, a ring, a bunch of keys, a dagger, a pistol, or a whip, which the actor has to present, to carry on, or perhaps (as in the case of the last-mentioned article) to use, should always be entrusted to the "property-man." In the arrangements now suggested, one person might very easily, and with advantage, "double" the parts of the property man and prompter. Although it will be prudent that the responsibility of the custody of the properties should attach to the prompter, whose place during performance is always at the wings, yet the actor should himself be on the alert, before going on, to see that such articles as he may want for his next scene are in readiness for him.

"In *Romeo and Juliet*, as written by Shakespeare, the heroine, upon awaking, makes use of a dagger which belonged to Romeo. In Garrick's alteration, Juliet leaves the dagger on the table, to prevent being forced to marry Paris, should the draught not take effect ; consequently,

she has no other resource than the dagger in Romeo's girdle. In Cibber's last season at Covent Garden, when playing *Juliet* with Barry, this dagger was not to be found ; at last, evidently much distressed, she held up her delicate fist and ideally plunged the weapon to her heart. The audience, out of respect to her talents, refrained from laughing, and applauded ; but the instant the curtain dropped, laughter prevailed throughout the theatre. Juliet has ever since trusted to her own care that necessary plaything—the dagger."

The most desirable qualification in the person who is to undertake the duties of prompter, are discrimination, promptness, and unobtrusiveness : the most usual defect is a fussy eagerness to be a little soon in prompting, and, when he is really wanted, giving the missing word in too loud a key. He should always attend the last rehearsal, at least, when the actors being perfect he will learn to distinguish between a pause purposely made for effect, and the hesitation which indicates a temporary failure of memory. The prompter's copy of the Play should be interleaved, and on the blank leaf should be written the properties required as they occur, and the cues for "curtain," "thunder," "lightning," "shouts," and every

other stage incident of the scene. With the "call-boy" at his elbow, he has the means of sending to the dressing-room, or green-room, to give the actors timely warning, so that the stage may not be kept waiting. Although the actors may have shown themselves at rehearsal perfect in their parts, a little nervousness at performance may at any moment jeopardise the effect intended, and it will be the prompter's duty then to supply the missing word, and in such a tone as shall reach the actor without being heard by the audience.

The prompter being the person who is to "hold the thunder in his hands," should have a piece of sheet-iron or tin suspended near him, which he will shake as may be required.

This is still the most approved form of thunder, notwithstanding all the attempts at improvements. Here is the result of one such :—

"Mr. Lee, while manager of the Edinburgh Theatre, procured a parcel of nine-pound shot. They were put into a wheelbarrow, to which he affixed a nine-pound wheel. Ledges were then nailed on the back of the stage, and the wheelbarrow, so filled, was trundled backwards and forwards over these ledges. The play was *Lear*,

and the thunder was eminently satisfactory at first; at length, as the king was braving the pelting of the pitiless storm, the thunderer's foot slipped, and down he came, wheelbarrow and all. The stage being on a declivity, the balls made their way towards the orchestra, and meeting with but feeble resistance from the scene, laid it flat. To crown the confusion which ensued, the sprawling thunderer lay prostrate in sight of the audience.'

CHAPTER V.

ADVICE TO ACTORS.

Was ever advice given to actors without quoting Hamlet's instructions to the players? Let the present be at least one exception; not because Hamlet's advice is wanting either in judgment or in useful common sense, but because every one with sufficient practical taste for theatricals, and a desire to excel in such performances, ought to be thoroughly conversant with the young Dane's wisdom, and to have already accepted his instructions, as embodying the most modern and essentially practical code of advice to be had or indeed to be desired.

The following items, taken from the *Dramatic Magazine*, 1829, are admirable in their ironical advice.

“There is no necessity to subject yourself to the slavery of studying your part. What is the use of the prompter? Besides, in a modern play, you may substitute something from your own mother-wit much better than the author wrote.

“Never attend to another actor in the same scene; you may be much better employed in arranging your dress, or in nodding to your friends in the audience.

“Never part with your hat; else what is to be done with your hands?

“In singing, never mind the music, and observe what time you please. It would be a pretty degradation, indeed, if you were obliged to run after a fiddler! No, no; let him keep your time—dodge him.

“Go to rehearsal but seldom; you are neither a school-boy nor a parrot, that nothing but repetition will beat the words into your head.

“The less you enter into your part, the more you can devote yourself to your dress. Always wear the smartest clothes you have, whatever the character. Why make yourself look ugly?

“Attitude is a great thing! When speaking, clap your left hand on your hip, and stretch out your right. Is it not clear that that which is

most easily recognised is sure to be approved
What figure is better known and respected than
that of the tea-pot."

These clever rules will at least point to that
which is to be avoided.

Before attempting to commit to memory the
words of the part, the copy of the play should
be properly marked with the "cues" for the
character, thus:—

Play—Charles the Second. Part of Rochester.

LADY C. (*laughing*). I see it is in vain to reason with you.

ROCH. Then give over the attempt. Let us talk of
something of a nearer and dearer interest—of your merits
and my most ardent flame.

LADY C. Ah me! I fear, like many other of your
flames, it will but end in smoke. You talk of being
desperately in love,—what proof have you ever given?

ROCH. What proof! Am I not ready to give the
greatest proof that man can offer—to lay down this sweet
bachelor life, and commit matrimony for your sake?

LADY C. Well, this last, I must say, coming from a
Rochester, is a most convincing proof. I have heard *you*
out, listen now to me. (*ROCHESTER bows.*) I will propose
a bargain. If, by your ascendancy over the King, you can
disgust him with these nocturnal rambles, and bring him
back to reason—

ROCH. Your ladyship forgets one of my talents.

LADY C. Which is it?

ROCH. That of getting myself banished two or three times a year.

By this arrangement the eye is at once directed to such portions only as the actor is required to give his attention.

The "part" being thus prepared, the actor is first to make himself acquainted with the play by reading it all through steadily. He will thus acquire a fair knowledge of the design of the play, and will the better be able to enter into the spirit of the part he has to perform. Next he must industriously commit to memory not only his own part, but the cues which lead to the speeches which belong to it.

When he has become tolerably perfect in the *words* of his part, he may begin to think of the manner of repeating them, and of the action with which they should be accompanied. At this period of his work it will be found very desirable to rehearse his part before a large looking-glass, that he may the better be able to judge of the action adopted, and the fitness of facial expression employed. An educated person, accustomed to the amenities of social life, will find that if an effort be made really to assume the character selected—

to "throw himself into the part,"—instinct will provide the requisite pathos, without the action degenerating into hateful rant.

The first stage-rehearsal will give the positions designed for entrance and exit, which are all previously to be arranged by the stage manager; subsequent rehearsals will accustom the actor to his "stage business," and the last, or "dress rehearsal," will give him an opportunity of making himself at home in his new costume. If the manager be an efficient officer, the patient and intelligent actor will obtain many valuable hints as to deportment, stage-walk, preparation for good exits, and a variety of detail which, although at first sight apparently insignificant, tend very materially to make a good and useful actor. For instance,—one of the most frequent stage duties, and one which is invariably blundered by the uninitiated, is the direction to "cross." Two characters on the stage holding a dialogue, stand in a line near the foot-lights facing the audience, pound away with the dialogue with an occasional wave of the arm, when they arrive at the fearful stage direction, "cross," which they both proceed to obey in a manner that shows the audience that no preparation has been

made for the movement. If, however, the actors have made themselves perfectly acquainted with the dialogue, and can thus devote a little attention to stage business, they may, while delivering the words, gradually change their relative positions, so that crossing becomes a natural part of the scene.

The management of the voice is another highly important consideration, upon which a few words may be said. It will scarcely be necessary, it is presumed, to caution the intelligent amateur against the vice of ranting, for bad as it is upon the public stage, it is utterly abominable and indefensible in private performances. A clear intonation, in a key somewhat higher than that used in ordinary speech, is to be cultivated; with such inflections of voice as the sense of the words to be uttered will suggest, taking care that the tone does not fall too low at the end of sentences, or the concluding words may prove inaudible. Unless the part be what is called a "patter" part, do not speak hurriedly, but rather err on the side of deliberation. Amateur actors mostly fall into the mistake of delivering the dialogue rapidly, which endangers distinctness and loses the opportunity of the advantage of a

little by-play. In speaking with other characters on the stage, the actor should turn towards the character addressed, but so that the audience may hear the dialogue ; he should at the same time avoid turning his back entirely on the audience.

If the reader should happen to have a practical knowledge of music, he will understand the advice to avoid speaking on one note, but to change the tone as much as the sense of the words to be delivered will allow. This will prevent falling into the objectionable monotony of speech which is so frequent and pronounced a failing of amateurs who are also inexperienced. The writer very distinctly remembers taking a lesson from the late Samuel Phelps, while playing a small part with that great actor in *The Doge of Venice*, then being played at Drury Lane. Phelps, on one occasion, came to the theatre, suffering from a most severe cold, which threatened to prevent his performance altogether ; but by dint of constantly changing the note upon which he spoke, he was enabled to go through a heavy part without any disappointment to the audience. Indeed, none but those behind the scenes were at all aware of the difficulty under which he was labouring.

Another hint for managing the voice is to avoid forcing it when impassioned language has to be uttered. In vocal matters (whether in speaking or singing), power is often as much indicated by reserving the strength as by its actual exhibition. There is, besides, this important advantage, that if the vocal power be well under control, the hearer will not be distressed by the fear of the strength failing. A proper—that is, a natural—method of producing the voice (which the music master inculcates by insisting upon the mouth being freely opened, and the rows of teeth in consequence well separated), will not only make the most of a weak organ, but will effectually guard against that trouble with which many public speakers are afflicted, and which goes by the name of “clergyman’s throat.”

Stage-walk is an important matter, notwithstanding that it has often been the subject of burlesque and derision. The actor who can walk the stage well is always at his ease, and his bearing adds importance to even an indifferent part. No mere verbal description can be of so much service as to witness and imitate a good actor. This observation is intended to apply only to the characters of light comedy or

walking gentlemen ; the eccentric skip of a Dundreary, or the clownish walk of Stephen Harrowby, are not subject to any rules.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PLAY-BILL.

A VERY important adjunct to the arrangements before the curtain is the Play-Bill ; indeed, it is, from one point of view, even more necessary for private performances than for public ones. It gives the audience something to read and talk about before the serious business of the evening commences, and is an unfailing means of introduction to persons who may previously have been strangers to each other. Whenever such private entertainments have been prepared on anything like an extensive scale, these bills have invariably been printed, and the playwright of the company, or, in his absence, the manager, has exercised his wits to produce some fun to add to the announcement.

In more than one instance that could be named there has been produced, in addition to the "House Bill," a large placard—printed with the brush in red and black inks—and hung up in the auditorium. These have contributed not a little towards putting the audience into good-humour; and it may very fairly be recommended.

In the olden time the dramatic author attached to a company, in addition to the literary labour involved in writing or adapting the pieces to be performed, was expected to perform the duty of "drawing" his audience by beating a gong or drum outside the theatre. Our amateur playwright must not therefore consider it beneath his dignity to indite the Bill of the Play. It may, indeed, furnish him with opportunities for airing his most recently-acquired jokes, and for "squibbing" his company; this latter as delightful an occupation to the writer as it is agreeable to the reader.

Supposing the home-circle to include one or two little girls too young to act, they may be dressed with little aprons and caps of white muslin or lace, and employed to introduce the company into the "dress-circle," and present the Bill of the Play. In cases where the per-

formance is to take place in a school-room for some charitable object, this department may be made a source of profit.

In giving examples of amateur play-bills, the writer frankly confesses to the difficulties of his research, from the fact of such effusions being strictly "private," and in many cases treated as too ephemeral to be preserved. The bill on p. 72, of historical as well as dramatic interest, has fortunately been preserved, and is quoted from *The Autobiography of Charles James Mathews*. Such examples will explain better than any mere description can do, and will indicate the fun that is to be had out of this part of the proceedings.

It should be mentioned, in order the better to understand and appreciate this bill, that M. Perlet, M. Emile, and Mr. C. J. Mathews were one and the same person; and as Mathews adopted the name of a French actor who was then playing *Dorival* in Paris, the announcement as to its being played by M. Perlet on the following night in Paris, becomes intelligible.

Theatre Royal, English Opera House.

(Particularly Private.)

This next Friday, April 26th, 1822, will be presented a Farce, called

MR. H——,

(N.B.—This Piece was damned at Drury Lane Theatre.)

Mr. H——, Captain Hill. Landlord, Mr. Gyles. Belvil, Mr. C. Byrne.
Melisinda, Mrs. Edwin. Betty, Mrs. Bryan.

~~~~~  
PREVIOUS TO WHICH AN ÉPILOGUE WILL BE SPOKEN BY MRS. EDWIN.

~~~~~  
After the Farce (for the first time in this country, and now performing
with immense success in Paris), a French petite Comedie, called

LE COMÉDIEN D'ETAMPES,

(N.B.—This Piece has never been acted in London, and may very
probably be damned here.)

Dorival (le Comédien), M. Perlet.

(Positively for this night only, as he is engaged to play the same part
at Paris to-morrow evening.)

M. Macbon de Beaubinson, Mr. J. D'Egville. L. Dupre, M. Giubilei.
Baptiste, Mr. W. Peake.

M. Corbin, Mr. O. Byrne. Madeline, Madame Spittallier.

~~~~~  
IMMEDIATELY AFTER WHICH

A LOVER'S CONFESSION, in the shape of a Song, by

M. EMILE.

(From the Theatre de la Porte St. Martin, at Paris.)

~~~~~  
To conclude with a Pathetic Drama, in one Act, called

THE SORROWS OF WERTHER.

(N.B.—This Piece was damned at Covent Garden Theatre.)

Werther, Mr. C. J. Mathews.

Schmidt (his friend), Mr. J. D'Egville. Albert, Mr. Gyles.

Fritz (Werther's servant), Mr. R. B. Peake.

Snap (Albert's servant), Mr. W. Peake. Charlotte, Mrs. Mathews.

Brothers and sisters of Charlotte by six cherubim got for
the occasion.

~~~~~  
ORCHESTRA.

Leader of the Band, Mr. Knight. Conductor, Mr. E. Knight.

Pianoforte, Mr. Knight, jun. Harpsichord, Master Knight (that was)  
Clavecin, by the Father of the Knights to come.

VIVAT REX! No money returned (because none will be taken).

☞ On account of the above surprising novelty, not an Order can  
possibly be admitted; but it is requested that if such a thing  
find its way to the front of the House, IT WILL BE KEPT.

Another play-bill, which is now for the first time publicly printed, is in the possession of Mr. Charles Dixon Budd, the elder son of one of the gentlemen whose name appears in the *Dramatis Personæ*. This performance was given at the house of Messrs. Calkin and Budd, the music publishers, in Pall Mall. The dialogue was written specially for the occasion, and the music entirely "discomposed and deranged by Mr. Jos. Calkin jun." It should be mentioned that the talented performer who personated the Ghost of Miss Bailey, and to whose attire a conspicuous line is devoted in the Bill, was a person of very tender years !

Particulars of a third amateur performance can be given from personal recollection. The Bill of the Play, which is annexed, has been rendered perfect through the kindness of the gentleman who played the principal tenor part. Mr. J. B. Buckstone was stage manager for the occasion, and Mr. Edward Fitzwilliam wielded the baton through the performance of the opera.

# Theatre Royal Adelphi.

## AMATEUR PERFORMANCE.

ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5TH, 1845.

To commence with Rossini's Opera of

### THE BARBER OF SEVILLE.

|                                    |                                      |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Count Almaviva, Mr. Thomas Rogers. |                                      |
| Doctor Bartolo, Mr. ———.           | Bazil, Mr. Marshall.                 |
|                                    | Figaro, Mr. Alfred Mellon.           |
| Tallboy, Mr. Trenkle.              | Fiorello, Mr. ———.                   |
|                                    | Rosina, Miss Kathleen Fitzwilliam.   |
|                                    | Marcellina, Miss Aileen Fitzwilliam. |

In addition to the music of the Opera, the following Songs, &c., will be introduced:—

"Smile, my Rosina," (Mozart's *Don Giovanni*), by Count Almaviva.  
 "The Orange Bower," duett, by Rosina and Marcellina.  
 "Hope is still a fair deceiver" (composed by Edward Fitzwilliam), by Marcellina.  
 "Cold deceiver, fare thee well" (from J. Barnett's *Farinelli*), by Rosina.

After which will be performed Mr. Selby's Farce,

### THE UNFINISHED GENTLEMAN.

|                                       |                         |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Lord Tatterley . . . .                | Mr. Buxton, jun.        |
| Frisk Flammer . . . .                 | Mr. Edward Fitzwilliam. |
| Bill Downey . . . .                   | Mr. John Reeve,         |
| With the Song of "My Lord Tom Noddy." |                         |

## CHAPTER VII.

## SOME CELEBRATED AMATEUR ACTORS.

THERE is always a certain amount of fascination connected with the early history of distinguished persons, in whatever sphere of life their lots may have been cast; and this is more especially the case with those who have been in any way associated with the stage. It may safely be asserted that in all the wide and extensive range of biography, the life of an actor is that which is most eagerly read and most thoroughly appreciated. It is well known that many who have become celebrated as professional actors have drifted into that position from having in early life shown an irrepressible love of dramatic excitement, which led them eagerly to seek opportunities for exercising their talents in private theatrical

performances, before adopting the profession of an actor. Although the lives of many such may have been written, yet the particulars of their early and strictly amateur days have been either altogether ignored, or have received but very slight attention. Indeed, it is perhaps not too much to say that the "Biography of the most celebrated amateur actors" has yet to be written, a circumstance the more noticeable considering the double attraction which the subject undoubtedly possesses.

Wherever the dramatic tendency has thus early discovered itself, notwithstanding the vigilance of the head of the family, opportunities for the exercise and development of the latent talent have been eagerly, and often successfully sought; and there are but comparatively few domestic circles that have been wholly free from more or less pronounced cases of the histrionic epidemic. The stage-struck hero has, indeed, been not unfrequently the subject of very considerable anxiety to the household, and has been the cause of a large amount of persistent ingenuity in the effort to nip the objectionable talent in the bud.

The names of the various amateurs who first

performed Henry Purcell's tragic opera of *Dido and Æneas* have not been handed down to posterity, but the fact of this first English opera having been written for and played by amateurs is worthy of notice in this place. All that is known of the history of this opera seems to be contained in the following circumstances connected with its first presentation, which are quoted from Sir John Hawkins's *History of Music* :—

“One Mr. Josias Priest, a celebrated dancing-master and a composer of stage dances, kept a boarding-school for young gentlewomen in Leicester Fields. The nature of his profession inclining him to dramatic representations, he got Tate to write, and Purcell to set to music, a little drama called *Dido and Æneas*. The exhibition of this little piece by the young gentlewomen of the school, to a select audience of their parents and friends, was attended with general applause, no small part whereof was considered the due of Purcell.”

The late Professor Edward Taylor speaks of Henry Purcell as “the father of the English Lyric Drama,” and the performance mentioned above has peculiar significance as being un-



doubtedly the first amateur performance of an opera in England.

In some cases, no doubt, the adoption of the dramatic profession has been more than encouraged by family surroundings; but in many, and by far the majority of instances, the attractions which the sock and buskin have offered, have been stoutly and persistently opposed by the guardians of the young Roscius. The celebrated Mathews's, both father and son, occur to the mind as noteworthy examples.

The elder Charles Mathews thus writes :—

“I was educated at Merchant Taylor's School, and Elliston at St. Paul's. In the evenings we became school-fellows, inasmuch as we were taught French by a Parisian lady of the name of Coterille. She had a small but select school, and at the Christmas holidays improved the boys by getting up English plays, much to the annoyance of my father, who was a preacher of Lady Huntingdon's connection. But for this circumstance, most probably I should never have commenced actor.”

At fourteen years of age, the elder, although scarcely less celebrated, Charles Mathews was apprenticed to his father, who kept a bookseller's

shop at No. 18 in the Strand ; but in 1793, when Charles must have been only seventeen, he made his first public appearance at the Richmond Theatre, playing the part of Richmond in *Richard the Third*, his friend being the Richard. For the privilege of enacting these characters, "the manager exacted fifteen pounds from these two young men before he would suffer them to act. Towards the conclusion of the fourth act, Richard being somewhat fagged, and having afterwards to play in a farce, requested Mathews to spare him in the fight, and let him *die easy* : but Mathews, being fresh in the field and anxious to display his skill in fencing (for which he had been taking lessons), was determined to have as much as he could for his seven pounds ten shillings, and nothing could move him. In vain was the request repeated. Richard fell from exhaustion, and died without a wound, before Richmond had displayed half his intended manœuvres !"

The late Leman Rede, an actor and dramatic author, who also commenced his career with amateur performances, thus wrote in *Colbourne's New Monthly Magazine* :—

"I apprehend the process of the malady which

is termed being stage-struck, is as follows:—love of a play—admiration of the actors—love of acting—resolution to act—and then the paroxysm of a performance! It would be curious to relate where each subsequently celebrated man made his real *début*; Mathews and Elliston played for the first time at a pastry-cook's in the Strand; Kean, when almost an infant, in a garret over the shop of Roach, the bookseller, in Russell Court; Munden in a slaughter-house in Brook's Market, Holborn; Knight, in a workshop at Birmingham; Mr. Reeve made his first essay on the top of the leads of a large hosiery warehouse in Maiden Lane, Wood Street. There Mr. Reeve was awhile located, and with some juvenile friends, got up two or three scenes from *Othello*, *Brutus*, &c., and these they rehearsed upon the housetop."

Reeve was not the only actor who had obtained celebrity as a comedian, but whose first aspirations were directed to the tragic muse.

The following from *Oxberry's Dramatic Mirror*, the authorship of which is attributed to Leman Rede, gives an instance of "doubling parts" which may often fall to the lot of amateurs:—

"Playing in private, when the aspirant has to

pay to perform, instead of being paid for performing, is rather an expensive operation, and our hero [William Oxberry] found his pocket 'always a day's march' behind his inclination; he, therefore, resolved on a bold scheme, fitted up an out-house at Edgeware, and commenced manager. One prudential rule our hero adopted—never to turn away money. If a visitor could pay a shilling, that was the price of admission; but if his pocket could only yield a penny, Oxberry reflected that 'every little makes a mickle,' and the penny was accepted. At Edgeware he played several nights. On one of these eventful evenings he personated Othello, and to the arduous duties of that character he tacked the part of money-taker. He put on the dress of the Moor, and, throwing over it a great coat, attended at the door to usher in the unsuspecting natives. At this lucrative post he remained till one of his brother comedians arrived with the intelligence—'The stage is waiting!' Off went Oxberry, and until he had reached the front of the lamps, never reflected that he had forgotten to black his face; the omission could not then be remedied, and he actually performed the blackamoor with a face

'Paler than Paris plaster.'

Nor did the audience take any notice of the circumstance, till the occurrence of the line—

‘ Haply, for I am *black* ;’

when one universal shout sealed the doom of the tragedy.”

Oxberry, the subject of this incident, was the son of an auctioneer, who after giving his son a good education, placed him with an artist of eminence ; but this occupation not being to his taste, he was transferred to a bookseller’s shop, and ultimately was apprenticed to a printer. The theatrical mania, which seems to have been his first nature, was in this position encouraged and developed, for his master was every bit as mad as his apprentice. “ The shop became a theatre ; in one corner sat Master Oxberry studying *Douglas*, while in another his master rehearsing *Glenalvon* ; they mutually neglected their proofs till their printing became a proof of their neglect.”

The celebrated John Fawcett, who may possibly still be remembered by play-goers of a certain age for his inimitable impersonation of “ Captain Copp,” was another instance of the ruling passion asserting itself in spite of all opposition ; although in his case it cannot be

stated with any confidence that he was known to do much as an amateur. Yet it can scarcely be possible, when he ran away from his apprenticeship to a City linen-draper and appeared on the stage at Margate, under the name of Foote, that that was his first attempt on the boards. Fawcett's ambition was to play tragic parts, and, in the full belief of his histrionic talent being in that direction, he for some time played in the provinces all the youthful tragedy parts, until the discernment of Tate Wilkinson, the York manager, almost compelled him to play in the then famous farce of *The Farmer*.

In the ranks of "celebrated amateur actors," a place will, by every one, be assigned to James Robinson Planché, who has but quite recently been removed from the stage of life. The son of a French refugee, he was articled to a bookseller, but his love of the drama led him to look forward to opportunities of trying his hand—or his feet—upon the boards. "At the theatres private, Berwick Street, Pancras Street, Catherine Street, and Wilton Street, alternately I murdered many principal personages of the acting drama, in company with several accomplices who have since risen to distinction upon the public boards ;

and, it is most probable, by this time I should have been a very bad actor, had not 'the sisters three,' and such odd branches of learning, occasioned me, by the merest accident, to become an indifferent dramatist."—(*Recollections and Reflections* by R. Planché.)

His first attempt at dramatic writing is thus given:—"Finding nothing in Shakespeare and Sheridan worthy my abilities, I determined on writing a play myself, and acting, of course, the principal part in it. The offspring of this thought was the burlesque entitled, '*Amoroso, King of Little Britain.*'"

Such is Planché's account of his first amateur performances as actor and playwright, which the writer can supplement by a reference to probably his last. This was a performance at the house of the late Charles Mathews, at Brompton, on December 31, 1867, to which Mathews had invited his friends to "see the old year out and the new year in." The piece was also written by Planché, in his burlesque style, and as it is unique as an amateur performance, and was only printed privately, there can be no impropriety in giving it here entire, with the names of the parties concerned in its performance.

THE  
COMPLIMENTS OF THE SEASON;

A PIECE OF  
PASTIME FOR THE PRESENT.

BY OLIVER OLDSTYLE.

SIXTY-SEVEN (the Old Year) . Mr. Bygone (Planché).

*His last appearance.*

SIXTY-EIGHT (the New Year, *alias*

Leap-year) . . . Mr. Coming (C. Mathews, jun.).

*His first appearance.*

CHRISTMAS (on this particular

occasion) . . . . Mr. Merry (C. Mathews).

GLEE SINGERS . . . . Messrs. Tenor, Concerted  
Tenor, Barry Tone, and Bass (Nunn, C. D. Budd,  
Turner, and J. Shirley Hodson).

---

*Scene*—Brompton.

Time 11.50, December 31, 1867.

The music by the celebrated Don Ferdinando (Herr Wallenstein), who has most liberally offered his gratuitous services to do "no more than he can do" (under the circumstances).

THE STAGE  
REPRESENTS A DRAWING-ROOM;

*Or, rather,*

The Drawing-room is represented as a Stage.

---



(*Enter SIXTY-SEVEN.*)

"'87." Pity the sorrows of a poor old year  
Whose trembling limbs have borne him to this  
door;  
Whose days have dwindled to the shortest here,  
And who to-morrow will behold no more!  
This is my last appearance on the stage,  
And so to say farewell I have made bold;  
Yet not so very great would seem my age,  
Though an old year I 'm only a year old.  
Yes—I was born—quite well I can remember—  
The first of January, Sixty-seven,  
And therefore on the first of this December,  
If months were years I could but be eleven.  
The fact is, I 've been living much too fast—  
A fashion which has made so many fail,  
The world has had a rage for some time past  
To go ahead—and thereby hangs a tale.  
Don't be alarmed—I haven't time to tell it.  
For soft! "methinks I scent the morning air,"  
And as I 'm not allowed to stop and smell it,  
I'll call in Christmas—he's got time to spare.

(*Beckons.*)

(*Enter CHRISTMAS.*)

A merrier Christmas than this lively sprite  
I couldn't wish you. *Keep him while you may!*  
He's just the sort of chap dull care to fight,  
For he was born, I 'm told, on Boxing Day!

(*The bells strike up.*)

(Turning to Christmas.) You'll see me out?

**"'67." No a step farther.**

**You're just in time, the clock is giving warning.**

**CHRISTMAS.** Good-night! There goes another year!

**"'68." Good morning!**

"'68." The New Year. (Jumps.)

**"'68." I thought that old bloke never meant to hook it!**

**CHRISTMAS.** You seem too fast. Why keep on jumping so?

"'68." Arn't I Leap Year? You wouldn't have me creep?  
CHRISTMAS. You've got two months to look before you  
leap.

*(Stopping him as he is about to jump.)*

If such a lot of springs you mean to make,  
'Twill be quick March with us, and no mistake!  
"'68." Well, there, I'll mark time while to all around  
You introduce me, as in duty bound.

CHRISTMAS. Upon my life, I don't know what to say.

"'68." Oh, "here we are again!"

CHRISTMAS. We—again—nay—

Christmas has here oft made his holly bough,  
But "'68" was never here till now.

*(To the company.)*

Ladies and gentlemen, you've welcomed me in,  
Now this is the New Year you've come to see in.  
I could tell tales of him who has gone out,  
But this young chap I know no more about  
Than you do! He is just the sort of lad  
May turn out good, or may go to the bad.  
He don't look, I should say, much like a sappy one,  
And we'll all wish that he may be a happy one;  
The race he started at would never last—  
He'd jump to a conclusion much too fast.  
And though Leap Year may be a hasty spark,  
I hope he won't be leaping in the dark—  
We had enough of that last year. Those blacks  
Have added twopence to the Income-tax,  
And, what makes matters worse, the question's  
whether  
They are worth twopence take 'em all together.

Nay, who knows that it won't be soon a guinea—eh?  
Plunged into an Abyss in Abyssinia?

Nay, come, young fellow (*to* " '68"), try what you  
can do,

As we are in the hole, to pull us through.  
There 's work enough for a good year before you,  
Get it well done, and, by Jove, we 'll encore you !  
Lay the foul fiend that lately has arisen,  
Don't burn a playhouse, nor blow up a prison,  
Look sharper out than did the " dear departed"—  
The last few years have been too tender-hearted—  
We hope to find you made of sterner stuff,  
And let the *wick*-ed feel you're up to snuff.  
The prices down of beef and mutton beat for us,  
And don't drive us to eat what isn't meet for us.  
If horse-flesh won't suffice to feed the masses,  
The next resource will certainly be asses.  
And heaven only knows where that will end !  
Some people won't have left a single friend—  
The present company excepted.

" '68."

Oh !

I say, shut up ! Don't go on preaching so,  
I came to pass a merry morning here  
And thought you 'd made us grin from year to year,  
Not stand there lecturing in this dull way ;  
It's like Ash Wednesday more than New Year's  
Day.

If anything my temper irritates  
It's waiting, and of all waits—Christmas waits !

CHRISTMAS. You're right, they even give me the Blue Devils,

And so have with you to our Christmas Revels.  
I waive all ceremony with my holly,  
Away with forms and let 's be awful jolly.  
Of ardent spirits here 's a famous stock,  
It's past twelve! Go it, boys, "like one o'clock!"  
Make everything to everybody pleasant,  
And prove no pastime can surpass the present.

GLEE.

Resulting in the glee of all the company at the announcement of supper.

After the performance, Planché sang the following

SONG.

*Real CHAMPAGNE CHARLEY.*

A toast upon this joyous night,  
I'm eager to propose,  
You're sure to hail it with delight,  
And so, my friends, here goes.  
I drink to one for whit and whim  
Unrivalled in his way,  
So fill your glasses to the brim,  
And "drain them dry as hay."  
For Champagne Charley is his name,  
Champagne Charley is his name,  
To it who can show a better right, boys?  
Ever up and sparkling, gay and bright,  
boys!

I've seen him in "one hour" do more  
Than scores could in an age,  
And make, as a "young Stager" roar,  
The oldest on the stage.  
And still he flits from "Grave to Gay,"  
With equal animation,  
And "Woodcock's Little Game" can play  
As well as "Speculation."  
For Champagne Charley, &c.

"Used-up," by Time, no jot is he,  
And long of such endurance,  
May "Dazzle" by his boy-ancy,  
Give London full assurance.  
To "Puff" he'll from "Sir Fretful" veer,  
Nor moult of Fame one feather,  
Some day he'll "Dangle" mix with "Sneer,"  
And play all four together.  
For Champagne Charley, &c.

Another glass I beg you'll fill—  
For that which down you've set,  
Although to him you drained it, still  
He's only half drunk yet,  
Another bumper no one can  
Object, I'm sure, to quaff,  
For howsoever good the man,  
He's got a better-half!  
"Mrs. Charley" is her name,  
"Mrs. Charley" is her name,  
To drink her health we ne'er would be  
loath, boys,  
And a Happy New Year to them both, boys!

The Mnemosynean Society in Portugal Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, was a celebrated stage for the encouragement of the amateur dramatic talent of the early days of the present century. Planché relates that here he recited some of his own compositions, and here he was associated in these histrionic enjoyments with John Reeve (who afterwards attained celebrity at the Adelphi Theatre), Frank Wyman (at the Olympic), and Miss Beaumont (at Covent Garden).

Many instances are given in his autobiography of Mathews's amateur performances. At three years and a half old, he made his first appearance in character on his father's dining-room table, when, attired in a complete little clerical suit, which had been given him by a friend, he proposed "the health of the tompany." His next appearance was while at Merchant Taylor's School; a benefit was given at Covent Garden Theatre, the attraction of which was to be a masquerade upon the stage. Tickets of invitation having been given for Mr. and Mrs. and Master Mathews, the young actor insisted upon going, and the little parson's dress was patched and lengthened for the occasion, and with some slight additions, Master Mathews appeared as

“The Doctor.” Subsequently, when at Florence, Italian Operas were being performed at the house of Lord Burghersh, the British Minister, he made his appearance as a chorus singer. Some particulars of Mathews’s first appearance as an amateur in London will be found in another chapter of this little book, where the play-bill for the occasion is copied.

In a notice however brief and restricted of Celebrated Amateur Actors, the omission of the name of the late Charles Dickens would be considered as showing but slight knowledge of the subject. Probably the most perfect troupe of amateur actors was that over which the celebrated novelist had sway. As a stage manager, he was unrivalled, and he was also a most accomplished actor, and the centre of a large and distinguished circle of clever performers.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

## SELECTED PLAYS SUITABLE FOR PRIVATE PERFORMANCE.

IN making choice of the following Plays from a rather extensive collection, it may be stated that all those productions in which the plots contain anything that may be considered equivocal or treading upon "delicate ground," have been omitted. Such plays, however interesting in action, or sparkling in dialogue, are considered to be quite inadmissible for the "Home Stage," and this will account for the absence of more than one piece which, having achieved success and popularity in many dramatic clubs, might have been looked for here.

The selected plays are divided into four groups.

1. Plays in Modern Dress.
2. Costume Plays.

3. Comedies and Plays, many in blank verse.

4. Farces.

The first group, "Plays in Modern Dress," besides the ordinary every-day drawing-room piece, also includes such plays as have an occasional "character-part," which requires to be specially dressed, as, for instance, *The Porter's Knot*, the part of Sampson Burr in which requires the dress of a porter, although the other characters are in every-day dress. Several of the drawing-room pieces in this group may be dressed a little more gaily than "modern dress" would seem to suggest. In this way, *The Dowager* will admit of an elaborate costume, if desired, and indeed, this is sometimes suggested to be played in "Powder Costume."

The second group, "Costume Plays," are such as, from the locality in which the action is supposed to take place, or the period in which some historical event has transpired, require the locality and period to be more or less accurately represented. The plot unfolded in *Charles the Second* would lose all its interest and significance if transferred to any other period or played in strictly modern costume.

"Comedies and Plays, many in blank verse,"

occupy the third group, including some modern as well as old comedies. This may be called a Selection from the Dramatic Classics ; and although there are passages, and, indeed, whole scenes in the works of some of the older dramatists, which would have to be expunged before the manager of our home theatricals could put them in rehearsal, yet these works are so universally admired as specimens of dramatic literature, as to completely justify their insertion in this list. It is the fashion to curtail many of these old comedies, so as to bring them within the compass of three acts, by which means they become more practicable in every way. This list does not include any of Shakespeare's plays, for two reasons: first, because there is probably not a household in the three kingdoms that is not familiar with them as "household words ;" and because, for the most part, the mounting them is too formidable an undertaking for private performance, and such an attempt would be calculated to invite "oderous" comparisons. Where the necessary courage is not wanting, the representation of some of the comedies will, however, well repay the trouble.

The section devoted to "Farces" requires no

specific explanation further than that as the low-comedy part is the essential, this requirement is particularly pointed out. The objection urged against choosing a farce for private performances is that it is too often vulgar, and in making the following selection an effort has been made to reject all pieces that are likely to offend in this way; at the same time, it is but fair to say that the actor to whom the low-comedy part is allotted has the matter, in this respect at least, entirely in his own hands.

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#### I.—PLAYS IN MODERN DRESS.

1. A MORNING CALL. By Charles Dance.

In one scene—a drawing-room. Characters for one gentleman and one lady, both in the ranks of genteel comedy. Time, three-quarters of an hour.

2. TWO O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING. By Charles James Mathews.

In one scene—an interior—and for two gentlemen. Time forty-five minutes.

A racy scene for two clever comedians.

3. HAPPY PAIR. By S. Theyre Smith.

A comedietta in one scene—an interior—for a lady and gentleman. Time, about forty minutes.

4. GOOD FOR EVIL; OR, A WIFE'S TRIAL. From the French of Emile Angier.

In two acts and one scene—a drawing-room. Characters for three gentlemen and two ladies, and a child eight years old.

This "domestic lesson" has been played in public under several names—"The Barrister," "Home Truths"—as well as the title here given.

5. **HEADS OR TAILS.** By J. Palgrave Simpson.

In drawing-room scene. For three gentlemen (one a low comedian) and two ladies.

6. **WHO SPEAKS FIRST.** By Charles Dance.

In drawing-room scene. For three gentlemen (one low comedy) and two ladies.

A capital and easily-arranged comedy.

7. **SUNSHINE THROUGH CLOUDS.** By Slingsby Lawrence (from the French).

In one scene—a modern interior. Characters for three gentlemen and three ladies. Time, one hour and fifteen minutes.

8. **ANYTHING FOR A CHANGE.** By Shirley Brooks.

Drawing-room scene, with characters for three gentlemen and three ladies.

A good play, requiring a clever light comedian in one of the gentlemen.

9. **GOOD FOR NOTHING.** By J. B. Buckstone.

In one scene—an interior. Characters for five gentlemen (two low comedians) and one lady. Time forty-five minutes.

This play is one that occupies the middle ground between costume and modern-dress plays. The

two low comedians have to be dressed, one as a gardener, and the other as an engine-driver. The lady's is a good part, and the play is deservedly popular among amateurs.

10. **THE DOWAGER.** By Charles Mathews.

In one scene—a drawing-room—for which the suggested Illustration No. 1 will serve as a background or "flat." Characters for four gentlemen (three good light comedy parts) and three ladies. The period of the play is 1790; but it is equally effective in modern costume.

A very simple play to get up.

11. **A HANDSOME HUSBAND.** By Mrs. Planché.

In one scene—a drawing-room. Characters for four gentlemen and three ladies, genteel comedy. Takes fifty minutes in representation.

One of the easiest plays. A very good one for the dramatic "prentice hand."

12. **THE DAUGHTER OF THE STARS.** By Shirley Brooks.

In two acts and two scenes (interiors). Characters for four gentlemen and three ladies. Time, one hour and forty minutes.

This play is really in one scene, but requires a change from summer to winter. If the window be draped with lace curtains the summer appearance will be given; using heavy curtains and representation of a fire will give the change to winter.

**13. THE MOMENTOUS QUESTION.** By Edward Fitzball.

In two acts and five scenes. The village inn scene would be the very thing for one scene, even without altering the sign. The landscape will do for the other out-door scenes. For one of the interiors a prison scene is indispensable, in order to produce a representation of the celebrated picture which gives the title to the play. Characters for five gentlemen (one low comedy) and two ladies.

**14. THE PORTER'S KNOT.** By John Oxenford.

A drama in two acts and two scenes (one an interior). Characters for five gentlemen and two ladies. Time, one hour and thirty-five minutes.

This play has a powerful part for the principal character, who must be capable of expressing sentiment. The other parts are also interesting.

**15. THE POST-BOY.** By H. T. Craven.

In two acts—an interior of a villa, and an apartment in London. Characters for five gentlemen—two low comedy, three walking gentlemen. For the three ladies, one will have to represent a French lady's-maid with broken English. Time of representation, one hour and a half. Costume modern, but the principal part will require the dress of a post-boy.

This is a play of considerable interest, and the leading part requires a combination of low comedy and sentiment, for which the late Mr. Robson and Mr. J. Rogers used to be famous.

**PLAYS SUITABLE FOR PRIVATE PERFORMANCE. 101**

**16. A BACHELOR OF ARTS.** By Pelham Hardwicke.

In two acts and two scenes; but as both are interiors, the same scene, with some slight alterations, would do for both. Scene—London. Time—present. Characters for six gentlemen and two ladies—all light comedy parts. Time in performance, one hour and forty minutes.

**17. ROLAND FOR AN OLIVER.** By Thomas Morton.

In two acts and two scenes (one interior). Characters for five gentlemen and three ladies. Time, one hour.

An excellent and very favourite stock piece.

**18. TIME TRIES ALL.** By John Courtney.

In two acts and one scene—an interior—with characters for six gentlemen (one low comedy) and two ladies. Time, an hour and a half.

An easy, popular, and interesting play.

**19. TIT FOR TAT.** By Francis Talfourd and Alfred Wigan.

In two acts and two scenes (interiors). Characters, six gentlemen (two low comedy) and three ladies. Time of performance, one hour and eighteen minutes.

**20. HEARTS ARE TRUMPS.** By Mark Lemon.

In three acts and six scenes (four being interiors may, by alterations of detail, be represented by one scene). Characters for six gentlemen (one low comedy) and three ladies. Time of performance, one hour and forty minutes.

Easily managed and effective.



21. **ALL THAT GLITTERS IS NOT GOLD.** By T. and J. M. Morton.

A comic drama in two acts and two scenes (interiors). Characters for six gentlemen (including one tragedy and one low comedy) and three ladies. Time, two hours.

A very suitable drawing-room piece.

22. **THE SERIOUS FAMILY.** By Morris Barnett.

In three scenes—all interiors. Characters for five gentlemen (one low comedy) and five ladies. Time, two hours.

23. **NOT SO BAD AFTER ALL.** By Wyvert Reeve.

In three acts and two scenes (one an interior). Characters for six gentlemen (two low comedy) and five ladies. Time of representation, one hour and forty minutes.

24. **OLD HEADS AND YOUNG HEARTS.** By Dion Boucicault.

In five acts and four scenes (three interiors). Characters for nine gentlemen and three ladies.

Not by any means a difficult play to mount, although being in five acts gives it a formidable appearance.

25. **EXTREMES.** By Edmund Falconer.

In three acts and one drawing-room scene. Characters for eight gentlemen and six ladies. Time, two hours and fifty minutes.

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II. COSTUME PLAYS.

26. **THE SWISS COTTAGE**; or, **WHY DON'T SHE MARRY.** A Vaudeville. By Thomas Haynes Bayly.

In one scene—"Interior of a Swiss Cottage." Two light-comedy parts for gentlemen, one of whom should be able to sing; and two for ladies, one with songs. The costume is Swiss.

An easily-managed play, and very effective.

27. **CHARLES THE SECOND.** From the French, by John Howard Payne.

In two acts and three scenes. The suggested scene No. 2, may be used for one, altering the sign of the tavern to "The Grand Admiral." Time of performance, one hour and fifty minutes.

There are four characters for gentlemen, three genteel-comedy and one low-comedy, and two for ladies—and all are good. There is an opportunity for the introduction of a vocal duet by one of the gentlemen and a lady.

The title of the play gives the period for the costume.

28. **THE JACOBITE.** By J. R. Planché.

A comic drama in two acts and two scenes—interiors. Characters for three gentlemen (one low comedy) and three ladies.

This play has a great reputation among amateurs, on account of its being interesting as well as easy.

**29. LOAN OF A LOVER.** By J. R. Planché.

A vaudeville in one scene—a garden. Characters for four gentlemen and two ladies. Time in representation, one hour and a quarter. Period—present. Scene—"near Utrecht."

**80. PAINTER OF GHENT.** By Douglas Jerrold.

A dramatic sketch in one scene, with characters for five gentlemen and two ladies.

**81. FOLLIES OF A NIGHT.** A Vaudeville Comedy, by J. R. Planché.

In two acts and five scenes; but by a little contrivance the same scene, with slight alterations, may be made to serve for a "saloon" and an "ante-chamber in the Palace."

The period of the costume is French, 1698, and there are six characters for gentlemen, four being good light-comedy parts, and two servants; two ladies are included, both interesting genteel-comedy parts. Two of the gentlemen and one lady have songs allotted to them, the music for which may be had at Chappell's, New Bond Street.

**82. COURT CARDS.** By J. Palgrave Simpson.

A comic drama, in two acts and two scenes (interiors), with characters for five gentlemen and three ladies. The scene is the Palace of Altenfels. Time, one hour and a half.

**88. FROM VILLAGE TO COURT.** By John Maddison Morton.

A comic drama in two acts and three scenes (one an interior). Characters for four gentlemen and five

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ladies. Time of performance, one hour and fifteen minutes. Costume, German.

**84. A HEART OF GOLD. By Douglas Jerrold.**

In three acts and five scenes (three interiors). Characters for seven gentlemen and three ladies. Period—1750. Scene—London.

This was the last play by this author, and although it has been said to be somewhat deficient in dramatic interest, the parts are all good and attractive. The play received but scant justice at the hands of the management when first produced, and its merits have not been appreciated, but amateurs will find it well worthy their attention.

**85. THE WEDDING GOWN. By Douglas Jerrold.**

In two acts and two scenes (interiors). Characters for seven gentlemen and four ladies. Period—1796. Scene—London.

**86. DON CÉSAR DE BAZAN. By G. A. A'Beckett and Mark Lemon.**

In three acts and five scenes, but one of the scenes may be "cut" without hurting the piece. Characters for nine gentlemen, three of which are very small parts, and may be doubled. Don César requires a good light comedian, and the Marquis is a low-comedy part. Two parts for ladies, both needing good playing. Time, one hour and fifty minutes. Costume, time of Charles II. of Spain.

This is a sterling and attractive play, well worth spending some time and trouble.

**87. COURT FAVOUR.** By J. R. Planché.

In two acts, but only one scene, altered for the second act. Characters for eight gentlemen and three ladies. Date of the play, England 1687, will give the period for the costume of a lively comedy.

**88. NELL GWYNNE; OR THE PROLOGUE.** By Douglas Jerrold.

A play in two acts and six scenes. Characters for eight gentlemen and four ladies, one of whom is to be dressed as a boy.

The period of this play is sufficiently indicated by its name, and the lady who may be cast for the title rôle will have three songs to sing.

Planché speaks of this as "the best comedy on the incidents of the reign of that monarch

'Who never said a foolish thing  
And never did a wise one.'"

**89. COURT BEAUTIES.** By J. R. Planché.

In one act, and may be done in four scenes, one of which must be specially painted, as it should represent "The Mall" in the time of Charles I. The date of the play sufficiently indicates the costume.

The parts in the play all belong to "Genteel Comedy," and one of the ladies should be able to dance and sing. There are nine characters for gentlemen, six of which are good parts, and two for ladies, both good. In addition, there are the "Court

## PLAYS SUITABLE FOR PRIVATE PERFORMANCE. 107

Beauties," of whom not less than three must be presented in realisation of Sir Peter Lely's pictures; the representatives of the "Beauties" have not much to do beyond *looking* their parts. There are also some English madrigals introduced, commencing with Wilbye's "Flora gave me fairest flowers," (1609), and concluding with "The Waitts," by Saville (1666). These madrigals, however, may be omitted if the "company" should happen not to be very musical.

This is altogether a charming play for amateurs; the situations are mirthful, the dialogue smart, the dresses picturesque, and the musical accessories unique and not difficult of accomplishment.

### 40. THE PRISONER OF WAR. By Douglas Jerrold.

In two acts and five scenes, two of which are interiors. By a little alteration of details, only three separate scenes will be required. The scene is laid in Verdun, and the period 1808.

There are characters for eight gentlemen, two worthy of amateurs with some tragic capabilities—a conventional stage Jew, two walking gentlemen, three light-comedy parts, two being Frenchmen. Of the five ladies wanted for the play, one should be a tragédienne, and the others belong to comedy.

This is a very suitable and superior play; the dialogue, as its author's name will sufficiently attest, is brilliant, the situations natural and effective, and including as it does both English and French characters, the costumes are varied.

41. **THE BLACK DOMINO; or, THE MASQUED BALL.** By T. E. Wilks.

A Romantic Drama, in three acts and three scenes, with characters for seven gentlemen and six ladies. Time of performance, one hour and a half. Costume, Spanish.

42. **THE SCHOOLFELLOWS.** By Douglas Jerrold.

In two acts and three scenes (two interiors). Characters for ten gentlemen and three ladies. Period—1785. Scene—Hampstead.

43. **DOVES IN A CAGE.** By Douglas Jerrold.

In two acts and five scenes, with characters for ten gentlemen and four ladies. Date—1662. Scene—London.

The scene may be easily managed and the play is effective.

44. **THE HOUSEKEEPER.** By Douglas Jerrold.

In two acts and four scenes (three interiors). Characters for eleven gentlemen and three ladies. Period, 1720. Time one hour and forty-five minutes.

45. **CHEVALIER DE ST. GEORGE.**

In three acts and three scenes (two interiors). Characters for ten gentlemen and four ladies. Time of performance, two hours. Period, 1770, French.

A good piece in the "Don Cæsar" style.

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III.—COMEDIES AND PLAYS.

*(Many in Blank Verse.)*

46. **EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOUR.** By Ben Jonson.

In five acts, with characters for thirteen gentlemen and three ladies.

This is the play in which the late Mr. Charles Dickens was so successful in the character of "Captain Bobadil."

47. **JOHN BULL.** By George Colman the younger.

In five acts, with characters for fourteen gentlemen and three ladies.

48. **THE POOR GENTLEMAN.** By G. Colman, Jun.

In five acts, for ten gentlemen and four ladies.

49. **BUSY-BODY.** By Mrs. Centlivre.

In five acts, for six gentlemen and four ladies.

50. **SPEED THE PLOUGH.** By Thomas Morton.

In five acts, for ten gentlemen and four ladies.

51. **THE GOOD-NATURED MAN.** By Oliver Goldsmith.

In five acts, for ten gentlemen and four ladies.

52. **SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER.** By Oliver Goldsmith.

In five acts, for six gentlemen and four ladies.

53. **SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL.** By R. B. Sheridan.

In five acts and five scenes, with characters for thirteen gentlemen and five ladies.

54. **THE RIVALS.** By R. B. Sheridan.

In five acts, and may be arranged in five scenes. Characters for seven gentlemen and four ladies.



## 55. THE HONEY-MOON. By John Tobin.

In five acts and six scenes. Characters for eight gentlemen and four ladies. The period—Spanish, sixteenth century.

This comedy is quite Shakesperian in character, and combines the plots of *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Much ado about Nothing*. It is deservedly popular among amateurs.

## 56. THE LOVE CHASE. By James Sheridan Knowles.

In five acts and as many scenes. Characters for ten gentlemen and seven ladies.

## 57. THE HUNCHBACK. By J. S. Knowles.

In five acts and seven scenes (five interiors). Characters for ten gentlemen and two ladies.

## 58. THE WIFE: A TALE OF MANTUA. By J. S. Knowles.

In five acts and seven scenes. Characters for sixteen gentlemen and two ladies.

These comedies of the late Sheridan Knowles are well worth the attention of amateurs, containing as they all do effective scenes and good parts.

## 59. WIFE'S SECRET. By George W. Lovell.

A drama in five acts and five scenes. Characters for five gentlemen and three ladies. The costume is that of the Protectorate.

## 60. THE LADY OF LYONS. By Bulwer Lytton.

In five acts, and may be arranged in five scenes, using the two suggested scenes and three others, two of which are interiors. Characters for eight gentlemen and four ladies.

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**61. LONDON ASSURANCE.** By Dion Boucicault.

In five acts and in four scenes, three being interiors. Characters for ten gentlemen and three ladies. Time—two hours and fifty minutes.

The parts in this popular comedy are all interesting, but some require exceptionally good acting.

**62. BUBBLES OF THE DAY.** By Douglas Jerrold.

In five acts and three scenes, all interiors. Characters for five gentlemen and two ladies.

**63. THE CATSPA.W.** By D. Jerrold.

In five acts and two scenes, interiors; with characters for five gentlemen and two ladies.

**64. TIME WORKS WONDERS.** By D. Jerrold.

In five acts and five scenes, with characters for ten gentlemen and five ladies.

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**IV.—FARCES.**

**65. TOM NODDY'S SECRET.** By T. H. Bayly.

In one scene (an interior), with characters for three gentlemen and two ladies. Costume, time of Charles II.

**66. CHISELLING.** By J. J. Dilley and J. Allen.

In one scene (an interior), with characters for three gentlemen (one low comedian) and two ladies.

An admirable farce, sure to "go."

**67. THE LOTTERY TICKET.** By S. Breazley.

In one scene, with characters for three gentlemen (one low comedian) and two ladies.

**68. THE TWO BONNYCASTLES.** By J. M. Morton.

In one scene, and characters for three gentlemen (one low comedian) and three ladies. Time, forty-five minutes.

**69. BENGAL TIGER.** By Charles Dance.

In one scene (an interior), and characters for four gentlemen (one low comedian) and two ladies. Time, one hour.

**70. MY WIFE'S SECOND FLOOR.** By J. M. Morton.

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